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Improving English language and literacy instruction through effective professional development: A practitioner, collaborative, reflective practice workshop in a middle school in Qatar

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor of Education by

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March 2021

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Abstract

This qualitative study described the impact of mandatory professional development and school-based professional development as situated learning on English language and literacy teachers' professional knowledge and instructional practices in Qatar's middle school. A hermeneutic approach was used to determine the impact of both a school-based and mandatory professional development on teachers' instructional practices. The theory guiding this study was situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991) where professional learning is seen to be context related. Constructivism, andragogy, school leadership theory and reflective inquiry were used to inform this study. The study considered whether reflection and dialogue with other practitioners contribute to effective professional learning that improves English language and literacy pedagogical content knowledge. Data collection methods included individual interviews, a focus group, document analysis and journal writing to provide insight into teacher professional development. The results revealed that both mandatory (formal) professional development and school-based development (professional learning communities as situated learning) could help teachers make changes in their thinking and practice, which might have a bearing on results. However, with a few exceptions, most teachers found mandatory professional development less helpful. The results revealed that teachers need more comprehensive formal training in English language and literacy instructional practices. They also need more opportunities to experience school-based professional development as authentic learning. They also need to collaborate in professional learning communities and specific professional development programmes to assess students' English language and literacy deficiencies. These findings were of significance to both school leaders and teachers as they sought to increase meaningful professional development aimed at improving English language and literacy instruction in their schools. The study recommended

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rethinking the current mandatory English language and literacy professional development components within a constructivist framework and developing a set of clear guidelines for high-quality literacy professional development to improve teachers' professional learning.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family; I would never have completed this work without their sacrifice and support. To my wife, Amani, who offered me time to complete this work, who encouraged and believed in me. And to my daughters, Noon, Noor and Nada, who were so supportive throughout this process. And my sons, Ahmed and Abed, who were so patient to postpone their needs to offer me the opportunity to go ahead with my thesis. I love you all so much.

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Acknowledgements

Throughout this learning journey, there have been many people who have supported me and pushed me in this process to think deeper and to have faith in myself. I would like to acknowledge and express my gratitude to the following people:

- My primary supervisor, Dr Anthony Edwards, for all his support and guidance as my advisor, is a source of knowledge and guidance throughout this process. I was extremely fortunate to benefit from his insight, ideas, and patience, which provided continuous support as he helped me through each stage of the thesis process.
- Dr Peter Kahn, my second supervisor, who supported me in this project and believed that it was something that I could accomplish, and for his supportive feedback throughout this thesis's development.
- Dr Lee Graham for encouragement and guidance through my early courses, helping me stay focused on my goals.
- Finally, thank you to the study participants who gave up hours after school and during their private time to support this study. I hope that this research makes a positive impact on the schools of the state of Qatar so that your voices can be heard.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research purposes and reasons for the study, set within the context of improving Qatar's educational system. It explores professional development in education for a New Era over the last 15 years. It examines how policy has defined the role of teacher professional development in the teaching process of literacy in English language content

English language and literacy competence in this study research site and other Qatar schools are considered essential for learning the English language, overseas study, and becoming global citizens and engagement at the workplace. Thus, in terms of the researcher's role and duty as an academic vice-principal in the school, responsible for increasing student's academic performance and ensuring teachers' professional growth, he is expected to lead to the teaching-learning process. Consequently, raising teaching quality of English language and literacy teaching an increasing concern to him due to students' underperformance in English language exams at school. This underperformance of students in both national and international English languages exams disappointed the researcher and led him to focus on teaching and learning English language literacy skills and how to improve it.

Teaching and learning the English language as a foreign language is not easy (AlAamri, 2013). It comprises many challenges for both teachers and students, necessitating intervention on the researcher's part as an instructional leader and a responsible person for professional development to improve students' learning. The school leaders and the English language teachers in the research site discussed students' underperformance. The discussions centred on the impact of teachers' professional practices in the classroom; thus, the critical research focus was on the model of professional development that would enable teachers to acquire the necessary tools that would help them improve student English language literacy learning.

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Teacher professional development can improve teaching; it helps teachers keep their skill sets renewed and learn new knowledge to maintain a high standard of teaching (OECD, 2009; DuFour, DuFour, Mattos, Eaker, & Many, 2016). Therefore, according to Kennedy (2016) teacher professional developments are based on how students learn and how teachers teach. However, throughout the state of Qatar, teachers attended mandated professional development programmes. While there has been some success with these professional developments, teachers have faced many challenges in realising these professional developments' potential benefits. The purpose of this study was to examine the current English language and literacy teacher professional development and its connection to the teaching of literacy in the English language in a preparatory school in Qatar as a factor contributing to students underperforming in English language exams. The study investigated teachers' perceptions of the professional development they received. It also investigated teachers' skills, knowledge and understanding (e.g. content knowledge, skills, beliefs, self-efficacy, views towards, and perceptions of English language and literacy skills that affect the teaching and learning in the research site. The study considered whether reflection and dialogue with other practitioners contribute to active professional learning that improves English language and literacy pedagogical content knowledge. The study also intended to help English language teachers consider which professional development was appropriate and desirable for their professional learning and develop English language literacy skills for their students. It sought evidence-based recommendations to improve teacher instructional practices to reduce literacy learning failure in the research site's English language.

Central to this study was the use of reflection as a primary tool for ensuring the impact of professional development and for stimulating a teacher-led process. Reflective practice was developed using reflective journals and discussions.

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This study described how a cluster of fifteen middle preparatory school English language and literacy teachers in Qatar employed collaborative, reflective practice workshops to approach their professional learning development (PLD). The study also explored other forms of teacher professional development and the change they could make in improving English literacy learning.

1.1 General context and global trends

Qatar's educational system was founded on Arabic schools' nationalistic and cultural traditions (Nasser, 2017). This system was found to be rigid and outdated. It failed to produce significant outcomes in the international exams. Thus, in 2001, the Qatari leadership approached RAND Corporation to examine the general educational system from K to Year 12 and recommend building a world-class system consistent with other Qatari initiatives for social and political change.

Unlike many countries in the Arabian Gulf, Qatar has applied a sustained effort to bring its higher education in line with international standards and be responsive to the requirements and challenges related to society's globalisation, the economy and labour markets (Smith & Vass, 2017, p. 64). Accordingly, Qatar considers internationalisation in higher education to respond to global trends and achieve quality in the educational system while preserving and respecting its identity and national culture (Knight, 1993). To accomplish this demand in its higher education system, Qatar created an Education City in 2003 to improve its international and intercultural dimensions. The Education City hosts various educational, research, and cultural institutions, including branch campuses of leading foreign universities to provide high-quality education to citizens.

The recommendations of RAND Corporation led to reforms "in which a system of independent schools was established. New curriculum standards were set, and teacher and professional leadership development were enhanced to find the most effective systems for Qatari

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students to succeed along with international and mainly Western benchmarks" (Nasser, 2017, p.3). RAND's assessment identified teacher professional development as a significant weakness that schools needed to reform to move forward with the curriculum and assessment practices. The Supreme Education Council (SEC) in Qatar began by identifying teacher professional growth (Nasser, 2017). Thus, Qatar has invested heavily in teacher professional development over the last fifteen years to improve student learning in different disciplines. New teacher development initiatives have stressed improving teachers' professional development through licensing and increased professional development to guarantee high-quality teaching in classrooms. Thus, there is real awareness and concern among education officials to improve education quality through this approach.

Nevertheless, an analysis of the educational system conducted in 2012 by the Supreme Education Council in Qatar (SEC) showed that Qatar had still been facing challenges affecting both supply and demand for education and training and linkage to the labour market. These problems include: (1) the underachievement of Qatari students in math, science and English language at all levels; (2) weaknesses in educational administration and the preparation and development of teachers.

There is a premise from some academics that teachers do not benefit from their training (Freeman, Reynolds, Toledo, and Abu-Tineh, 2016; Nasser, 2017). Professional development provided to teachers at all levels for high-quality instruction focuses on student-centred practices in classrooms; however, actual classroom observations in Qatar's state showed that teachers did not successfully implement these standards. Critical elements of student-centred instruction such as real-world applications, active student participation, student autonomy, and differentiation in strategies and curriculum" (Ameliana, 2017, p. 59), and "the incidence of classroom behaviours

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associated with student-centred classrooms found to be very low across schools. However, schools making more progress meeting standards tended to exhibit higher levels of student-centred behaviours" (Ikhlef, & Knight, 2013, p.1). Teacher quality was the most critical factor in student achievement in schools that had improved student achievement (Ikhlef, & Knight, 2013; Nasser, 2017).

Consequently, the SEC introduced the national professional development standards as crucial education features for a New Era. These standards were adopted to provide a clear vision of performance, knowledge, skills, and dispositions that teachers and leaders needed to know. This demand put pressure on schools to respond more effectively to learners' needs (Nasser, 2017).

Despite acting on these demands, many teachers still do not reach the standards required by these policy initiatives. Many lack the training to be effective English language and literacy teachers. The lack of training is evident in reviewing professional development programmes and interviews with teachers who state that current professional development programmes are insufficient in providing them with appropriate strategies and techniques for English language and literacy instruction. Conducting evidence-based research to identify professional development would improve English language teachers' practices and student learning. Accordingly, this research study focused on finding the most effective systems for building teachers' capacities instead of external professional development providers to offer teacher professional development programmes for English language teachers (Freeman, Reynolds, Toledo & Abu-Tineh, 2016)

1.2 Research context

This study's setting is a state-funded school in the northern part of Qatar for students of all nationalities. The school serves students aged thirteen to fifteen by offering preparatory curriculum in different disciplines such as Arabic general science, sports, fine arts, Islamic studies, social

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studies; and information technology. Qatari students represent 70 % of the four hundred and fifty students. The remainder is students of different nationalities: Palestinian, Sudanese, Yemini, Egyptian and Pakistani. Students follow a challenging circular that allows for critical and creative thinking, independent learning and technological integration. The school employs approximately 65 teachers who teach different disciplines. Fifteen of these teachers are English language teachers. They are responsible for improving all students' English language and literacy skills to prepare them for secondary and college education. They are also accountable for enhancing English language and literacy skills by adapting their methods and the instructional materials to meet students' varying needs and interests. They are also expected to be reflective practitioners and change agents better able to meet the demands for quality education. Given these circumstances, significant professional development to improve teachers' professional practices to enhance education quality is essential. The SEC sets policies to guide the teaching and learning process in both public and private schools. It is also responsible for the training and professional development of public sector teachers, who share training opportunities and development experiences. They attend mandatory teacher training workshops to maintain and improve professional competence. Despite this input, student' performance in English language and literacy skill is still below expectation.

The researcher's current role in the school, where this research study occurs, is an academic vice-principal. He has been in this position since 2009 and has assisted the principal in fostering the school vision and mission while supervising a diverse group of staff and students. He feels he leads by example through personal work ethics and shown commitment to innovation and creativity. These opportunities have enabled him to develop strong communication, organisational,

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and leadership skills, which will improve academic achievement and reinforce the school's standards, policies and goals.

As an academic Vice Principal, the researcher aspires to establish a school culture and educational programme conducive to student learning and socialisation. He also seeks to promote staff professional growth and development, as well as teamwork and cooperation. He used to meeting with staff members every week to reflect on the problems they faced and planned collaboratively to solve challenges. Hence, the value of collegial relationships and shared vision were established for him early in his administrative career. The researcher relied heavily on the collaboration and reflective practices he has employed with staff members to effectively conduct his research.

To ensure that no child was left behind (NCLB) (United States. Congress (107th, 1st session: 2001). No Child Left Behind Act of 2001: conference report to accompany H.R. 1. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office), required interventions from the researcher as an academic leader in charge. He used his expertise and professional development knowledge to help with this plan. He has delivered many professional development activities to help build his staff's capacities and competencies and better reflect on their instructional practices to improve student education. This collective experience also enables the researcher to utilise his research participants more effectively to benefit their learning.

The researcher assumed that quality professional development would produce high-quality English language and literacy teachers. This conviction led him to explore the connection between professional development and teaching quality through this research. The researcher contended that teachers need to understand the shifts required in curriculum, instruction and assessment to

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implement the SEC's new curriculum standards. Teachers need to have hands-on opportunities to acquire teaching strategies responsive to these demands (Desimone, 2009).

1.3 Problem statement

In Qatari schools, English, as a second language (L2) is taught to all primary, preparatory, and secondary schools. English language standards were introduced to enable students to develop English language skills appropriate for further or higher studies and allow students to join a workplace where English is the medium of communication or instruction. They are focused mainly on achieving skills and functional outcomes. These standards are structured based upon developing literacy knowledge in English language content area (Supreme Education Council, SEC, 2008). Accordingly, schools are held accountable for improving students' learning in English language literacy knowledge. Subsequently, teachers have been offering consecutive professional development programmes to empower them to improve literacy learning and teaching.

English language teachers in this research site, like other teachers in Qatari schools, have attended many English language and literacy professional development programmes to improve English language instruction. Despite all these professional development programmes offered to teachers, student underperformance in learning English language literacy skills in the research site has been observed and documented in many reports. Student's data at hand indicates that students are experiencing challenges in English language literacy skills, particularly in reading comprehension and composition writing. Student's exams' records and classroom observations repeatedly demonstrate that students face challenges in English language and literacy skills. They appear to encounter many difficulties with printed text and writing tasks. There could be other reasons behind a student's failure in learning the English language. Still, this research focuses on the impact of teacher professional development on improving the quality of English language and

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literacy instructional practices. Therefore, in the endeavour to reform teacher's instruction practices in his school, and to look for the causes of the deficiency in student literacy learning, the researcher, based on the outcomes of RAND's Report of 2012, assumed that professional development for teachers could be a significant weakness in the school and an area for intervention.

English language teachers at the researcher's school and English language teachers from other schools must take mandatory formal professional development provided by three bodies as required by the SEC. These three bodies are the national government, universities and extra-governmental providers such as foreign embassies. These bodies generally have their rationales, which may influence classroom practices and align with teachers' experience (Freeman, Reynolds, Toledo & Abu-Tineh, 2016). However, they supply information about teaching strategies without engaging in discussion about teachers' context. A professional development survey revealed that Qatar's English language teachers' professional programmes led to its failure (Freeman, Reynolds, Toledo & Abu-Tineh, 2016). Freeman, Reynolds, Toledo and Abu-Tineh (2016) claimed that the teachers did not take up from these programmes because they were irrelevant and inappropriate to improve their instructional practices in schools. They clarify that teachers need substantial professional development to enhance their profession. Though the evidence of the direct impact of professional development on student learning is limited, research finds that active professional development is fundamental to excellent pedagogy (Stoll, Harris, & Hands comb, 2012).

The school organisational structure consists of the principal responsible for fostering the vision, planning, strategy, school development planning, and teachers' promotion. The Deputy Superintendent**:** is responsible for student discipline, student activity, transportation, health care, emergency preparedness. The Academic Affairs Vice-Principal**:** is responsible for the development programme plan, teachers and teaching resources distribution, classroom

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management, subject selection, student assessment, and teacher training. Then, the administrative duty department includes two sections - the financial department and the human resources department. It deals with budget planning, teacher recruitment, and teacher motivation.

As an academic vice principal in the school where this research takes place, the researcher is also responsible for monitoring student progress. His roles and responsibilities are to impact learning outcomes and encourage effective teaching to increase student academic performance. These roles allow him to evaluate the learning process very carefully and to measure students learning outcomes regularly. As Academic Vice Principal, the researcher also has access to students' exam records and teacher's classroom observation reports. This right is given to every academic vice principal in Qatari schools by SEC as he/she is responsible for increasing students' academics and teacher's development in schools. Thus, he must detect the problems that occur daily and interfere with finding solutions to them.

Professional development is viewed as a reform policy for Education in Qatar; therefore, these learning discrepancies are attributed to challenges related to teachers' performance in the classroom according to RAND in 2012 (Nasser, 2017). The analysis of students' records and the feedback from English language supervisors who oversee teachers' performance in the school also focus on the instructional practices implemented by English language teachers in classrooms. Thus, reflecting on students' performance in the English language compared with their weak English language tests results stimulated the researcher to think of this problem's causes. He assumed that teachers' professional development experiences were behind their students' underachievement in English language tests. Reflecting on these concerns, the researcher began to think about the following questions,

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- To what extent are the approaches to teaching English language and literacy in the school ensuring skills are built progressively and in a structured way in professional development provided to teachers?
- To what extent do the approaches to professional development promote continuity in learning in the school?
- How well do we plan opportunities for teachers to discuss their learning with peers?
- What strategies do we use to involve teachers in identifying their professional learning targets and discussing how they will achieve these targets?
- Do we involve teachers in planning their professional learning and agreeing to gather evidence of learning for the assessment?
- What practical steps do we need to take to ensure teachers have the skills they need to take more responsibility for their learning?
- How effective are our arrangements to ensure that learners have regular discussions to review learning and plan the next steps?

Thus, this study intends to investigate and help to explore these challenges in terms of practitioner research. It should be possible to plan professional development programmes that align our teachers' personal and professional needs with those of the school and our students' literacy learning in the English language content area.

1.4 The significance of the study

This study is critical because it seeks to identify a useful professional literacy development model to best address literacy teachers' needs to improve literacy learning in this research site. The study looks for practical, evidence-based recommendations to benefit literacy teachers in the schools of the research site, and consequently, improve students' English language literacy skills.

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The study results may encourage other similar schools to investigate their professional development programmes and rethink their English language and literacy instructional practices within an appropriate theoretical framework that helps improve English language and literacy learning in their organisations.

1.5 Summary

In conclusion, this research study's main goal was to investigate and help explore the problems that hindered students' English language and literacy learning. The researcher was thinking of how to improve student learning in the English language content area. Reflecting on these issues, he worked collaboratively with English department teachers to find solutions that can be applied in his institution and maybe beyond. His initial intention was to engage English language and literacy teachers in the school in a collaborative and reflective process to develop an effective professional development programme that could increase their knowledge and expertise to improve student learning in the English language. He assumed that selecting appropriate professional development required responsiveness to both teachers and learners' needs and the settings in which the teaching and learning process took place. Therefore, it was vital to align student learning needs with teaching and staff professional learning. Engaging staff members in the change process, particularly those of the same discipline, was crucial for improving school education.

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CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Even though several factors affect effective professional development programmes, their efficiency depends on the teachers' ability to implement the given programmes in their professional practices in the classroom (National Research Council, 2006).Therefore, to effectively support English language education, teachers need to possess specific knowledge and grasp specific skills (Wittek & Habib, 2013).Students' underperformance in the English language and its' relationship to the research study has brought the issue of professional development design to the forefront based on the framework of teacher inquiry and knowledge – building cycle to promote valued student outcomes (National Research Council, 2006; Wittek & Habib, 2013)

This chapter explores relevant literature to understand teacher professional development and a useful model for teachers' professional learning and professional growth, in addition to school leadership's role (Day & Sammons, 2013; Raman, Mey, Don, Daud & Khalid, 2015; Michael, 2014) in providing teacher professional development. Other features that have an impact on the teachers' growth will also be discussed in this chapter. Literature has also been consulted to explore the relationship between quality teaching and significant professional development and how teachers' competencies affect students' success. The relationship between professional development and reflective practice and the relationship between digital technology and English language teaching and learning in the twenty-first century will be investigated to understand their impact on students; learning.

2.1 Defining Teacher professional development

Teacher professional development is an essential mechanism for enhancing teachers' knowledge and instructional practices (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006).It is

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critical to all staff's effective work performance, including teachers (Stoll, BolamMcMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006, p. 224). Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace & Thomas (2006. p.1) claim that educational reform's progress depends on teachers' individual and collective capacity and its link with school-wide capacity for promoting pupils' learning". This claim indicated that teacher professional development as a critical determinant in meeting today and future educational demands in capturing learners' interest should be defined and designed carefully to address these needs. So, what is professional development?

Teacher professional development has been described in many different ways by multiple agencies and individuals such as (Hassel, 1999; the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD, 2009; The Virginia Department of Education, 2004; Avalos, 2011; The Glossary of Education Reform 2013).

Hassel (1999) defined teacher professional development as a method of improving staff skills and competencies needed to produce significant educational results for students. OECD (2009, p.49) viewed teachers' professional development as "activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher. The Virginia Department of Education (2004) regarded teachers' professional development as an activity based on substantive, well-defined objectives. It implies rich content specially chosen to deepen and expand all staff members' knowledge and skills in the schools. Avalos defined teacher professional as the following:

> "Teacher professional development is about teachers learning, learning how to learn and transforming their knowledge into practice to benefit their students' growth. Teacher professional learning is a complex process, which requires cognitive and emotional involvement of teachers individually and collectively, the

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> capacity and willingness to examine where each one stands in terms of convictions and beliefs and the perusal and enactment of appropriate alternatives for improvement or change." (Avalos, 2011, p 27).

Radda (2012) supported Avalos's professional development definition by viewing professional development as teachers' learning approach. How teachers learn to learn and how they apply their knowledge in practice to support pupils' learning. The Glossary of Education Reform (2013) referred to professional development as a variety of specialised training, formal education, or advanced professional learning planned to help administrators, teachers, and other educators improve their professional knowledge, expertise, skill, and efficacy.

Mizell (2010, p.3) claimed that professional development denotes many educational experiences related to an individual's work. He considered professional development as "the strategy schools use to ensure that educators continue to strengthen their practice throughout their career" (p.3). Similarly, the New Jersey Department of Education, NJED (2014) referred to professional development as activities that comprise professional learning opportunities aligned with students' and teachers' needs, focusing primarily on improving teachers' and school leaders' effectiveness for the sake of all students' success.

Evans (2002) described professional development as "formal and informal requirements for the improvement of educators as people, educated persons, and professionals, as well as regarding the competence to carry out their assigned roles." Whereas Fullan (2006) viewed professional development differently. He described professional development as professional learning to refer to the ongoing, focused "daily learning of teachers individually and collectively".

Recently much attention has been given to professional learning communities as a driving force for active teacher learning (Easton, 2008; Alvallos, 2011). Alvallos (2011) stated that

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professional development is a complex process that requires teachers' cognitive and emotional contribution as individuals and groups. In the same vein, Easton (2008) emphasises the importance of professional teacher learning by proclaiming that "If schools are to change to meet their increasingly urgent needs, teachers will have to move from being trained or developed to becoming active learners" (p.755). This viewpoint is supported by Webster-Wright (2009), who claimed that the concept of what is called teacher professional development is considered irrelevant to make immediate changes in teacher's practices because it just focusses on delivering content rather than enhancing learning. Consequently, school leaders need to pave the way for collaborative professional learning experiences that promote teachers' positive learning environment. They should offer intensive, abundant learning opportunities for teachers to work together to create their knowledge and strengthen their expertise to effectively improve students' learning (Little, 2006).

All these definitions assume that building staff's capabilities are fundamental for quality teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the researcher views Fullan's description of professional development as a perspective shift that aligns professional development with teachers' daily knowledge individually or collectively with other colleagues as a practical development that can be adopted in his school. This definition suggests that teachers are social individuals who interact and learn from each other in the context where they work (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Jones, Stall, and Yarbrough, 2013). This interaction encourages teachers as reflective practitioners to think positively and practically about what they do, reflect on their practices and what they could share with colleagues, and identify their own learning needs (Lave & Wenger, 1991). However, unfolding the association between student learning and teachers' instructional practices and teacher professional development requires understanding the meaning of quality teaching and its factors. Professional development is all about change in teachers practices in the classroom (Guskey,2000);

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thus, bringing this change in teachers' practices and student achievement, teachers' views should be valued and considered when planning professional development programmes (Guskey, 2000).

2.1.1 Limits of the definitions of professional development

As seen in the descriptions of professional development above, the focus is that professional development is a process that entails learning experiences and the acquisition of knowledge. However, they differ from professional learning about its underlying structures.

According to Avalos (2011), the process of professional learning should not stop accumulating knowledge but preferably with the successful and continuing application of this knowledge in the classroom setting in a way that benefits students. This assumption entails looking at professional development from a different angle. The focus of teacher development should result in more than superficial change. It should be considered in a professional learning framework that integrates the concept of professional learning communities as a model for development which is characterised by several beliefs and core norms (Servage, 2008). Accordingly, professional development is significant when it is collaborative and collegial. This collaboration should involve inquiry and problem-solve in an authentic context (Lave & Wenger, 1991) of daily teaching practices that lead to quality teaching (Servage, 2008) and valued student outcomes (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007). So what is quality teaching?

2.2 Defining quality teaching

Quality of teaching is considered the most substantial impact on student teaching (National Research Council, 2006; Wittek & Habib, 2013). Quality teaching is vital to students' success and is essential for quality learning, contributing to long-term student success (OCED, 2009).

Wittek and Habib (2013) argued that education's ultimate goals concerning access need to be accompanied by quality instruction. Therefore, teachers' pedagogical and content knowledge is

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essential in determining student achievement gains (the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, 2014).

Professional development for English language teachers is required continuously to accommodate student learning changes (The National Council of Teachers of English, 2006). Challenges that face students' learning the English language occur due to teaching large classes, differentiation strategies, and motivating students, in addition to the chronic low achievement of at-risk learners, incoherent instructional initiatives, and limited diagnostic evaluation and progress monitoring expertise. Teacher quality and experience are considered vital factors that hinder or facilitate student literacy learning (Freeman et al., 2016) However, research finds that English teachers' competency plays a vital role in language teaching and learning (Zhang, 2016). Therefore, "Eclecticism", which means to select acceptable teaching methods from various teaching methods, emphasises collaboration of teaching methods rather than focusing on a specific teaching method for quality teaching.

Based on these claims, the researcher assumes the underperformance of students' English language literacy skills in the research site to deficiencies of quality teaching and teacher professional development, as stated earlier. Thus, students' underperformance in English language and literacy skills requires high quality and significant professional growth. Teachers should make great gains in knowledge, skills and teaching strategies to improve their learning. Accordingly, solving this problem requires consulting literature to understand what quality teaching means and what appropriate approaches are needed to improve English language and literacy education and teaching in this study.

Research has found that active English language and literacy learning occurs when schools raise literacy education standards and insert high impact strategies in English language and literacy

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development programmes (Sartale, 2017). Sartale (2017) supported this notion by asserting that there are some features of high-quality teacher that mark quality English language and literacy instruction. He states that the quality of teaching in this meaning depends on a) enabling inputs, b) teachers' abilities, c) learners' characteristics, d) educational process, and e) the specific context (p.6). Thus, teachers' pedagogical and content knowledge are essential factors that influence what students learn.

Moreover, high-quality teachers can demonstrate and use appropriate teaching strategies to promote learners' enormous literacy growth (Sartale, 2017; OECD, 2009). They are reflective of their practices and are aware of developing their pedagogical content knowledge to respond to students' actual needs. Consequently, they have a positive effect on students' literacy learning (Shulman, 1987). These claims may indicate that teachers' pedagogical knowledge gaps can harm students learning (Shulman, 1987). Thus, the researcher urged that English language and literacy teacher in the research site should be offered opportunities for high-quality development to possess the appropriate pedagogical knowledge in a way that enables them to improve students' literacy learning. Any gap in knowledge makes it more difficult for them to select and apply the appropriate literacy instruction strategies that enhance students' learning.

Wenglinsky (2001), examining the relationship between teachers' classroom practices and student academic performance in the US, identified that teachers contributed to student learning as the students themselves. Teachers' characteristics, together with other aspects of teaching, such as effective professional development teachers received and the instructional practices they implement in the classroom, have a high impact on students' learning. Easton (2008) asserted that teachers' abilities are built and sharpened by the quality of the professional experiences they undergo. They need a high degree of professional development that makes real change in their

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professional knowledge and thinking and prepares them to teach effectively in classrooms (Ali & Rizvi, 2007). This knowledge might be achieved through professional learning rather than mere professional development (Easton, 2008; Ali & Rizvi, 2007; Webster-Wright, 2009; Alvallos, 2011). Thus, understanding how teachers acquire this knowledge is crucial for improving literacy teaching and learning for English language literacy teachers in this study. This viewpoint suggests that enhancing quality teaching in schools requires support and guidance from school instructional leaders (Bembenutty, White & Vélez, 2015; Allington, 2005). Literacy professional development events for English language teachers should be responsive and appealing to teachers. These events should enable English language and literacy teachers to grow professionally in a context where they can discuss their problems and learn from each other. Therefore, teachers' professional development for English language and literacy teachers should be designed by themselves. They need to work together as groups led by experienced teachers to guide them toward the desired goals (Bembenutty, White & Vélez, 2015).

Wei, Andree and Darling-Hammond (2009) suggested that one of the most important ways to produce high performing schools is to develop high-quality teachers. However, to understand this claim, the researcher thinks there is a need to define quality teaching because of the growing concern about English language and literacy teachers' behaviour in the classroom that facilitates learning in schools. A study in Nigeria researching the strategies teachers used to teach the English language revealed that most English language teachers do not have adequate grammatical concepts. Thus, these teachers ended up communicating their students' wrong information (Ayeni, 2011). The researcher thinks that this situation is a severe gap in the teaching-learning process. This claim implies that teachers' instruction approach is one factor that may affect students' achievement and facilitates high standards of learners' outcomes or the opposite (Ayeni, 2011).

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This assumption posits that the quality process requires that classroom instruction should meet the set standards of teaching.

Although quality teaching is at the heart of student learning outcomes, it is seen as a complex and challenging concept to define. There is no one definition of quality teaching or universally accepted purpose of quality teaching (Henard & Leprince-Ringuet, n.d; OCED, 2009; Sakarneh, 2011; Henard & Leprince-Ringuet, 2012; Desta, Chalchisa, & Lemma, 2013; Wittek, & Habib, 2013; Brockerhoff, Huisman, &Laufer, 2015). It is a multi-dimensional concept (Brockerhoff, Huisman, &Laufer, 2015).

Henard and Leprince-Ringuet, (n.d) stated that although quality teaching is fundamental, it remains a controversial concept as "the landscape of higher education has been facing continuous changes" (P.3). They emphasised that new teaching methods and modern technologies have changed the relationship between teachers and students and changed quality teaching. Thus, because quality teaching is highly varied (OCED, 2009), it must be thought of dynamically, considering contextual changes in the educational environment where education occurs.

Wittek and Habib (2013) thought that quality teaching is complex, and there are differing views about how it is best characterised. They state that the term "quality" is probably used in combinations such as quality systems to refer to networks using different functions, aspects, and quality levels in an educational organisation to improve its performance. Nevertheless, defining quality teaching is essential to help to create a framework for teacher professional development.

Szarkowska, Díaz Cintas and Gerber-Morón (2020) indicated that quality means different things to different audiences and stakeholders. They stated that the meaning of the word 'quality' depends on the context in which it is used, whether this context is economy or education. For

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example, if the word quality is used with commercial dealings, it may mean product, but if it is used in education, it may mean the learning outcomes.

Coe, Aloisi, Higgins and Major (2014) described quality teaching as resulting from the knowledge and skills and pedagogical strategies that teachers gain. They claim that teachers gain these skills due to participation in professional development sessions that "leads to improved student achievement using outcomes that matter to their future success. However, the researcher thinks that just involvement in professional development is insufficient to produce quality teaching if teachers do not possess professional identity and self-efficacy. He assumes that these two facets are essential for instructional change.

Hénard and Roseveare define quality teaching as:

> "…the use of pedagogical techniques to produce learning outcomes for students. It encompasses several dimensions, including the effective design of curriculum and course content, various learning contexts (including guided independent study, project-based learning, collaborative learning and experimentation), soliciting and using feedback, and effective assessment of learning outcomes. It also involves well-adapted learning environments and student support services" (Hénard & Roseveare, 2012, p. 7).

On the other hand, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (2014) asserted that teachers' professional standards are the driving force for quality teaching. They outlined what teachers should know and do. These standards showed three principle domains that directly affect education: professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement. The APST emphasised that quality teaching should draw on aspects of all these three domains. First, professional experience entails knowing students and how they learn, understanding students'

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differences and their cultural background to address their learning needs—knowing the content and how to teach it. Second, the professional practice requires planning for and implementing effective teaching and learning, creating, and maintaining supportive and safe learning environments, then assessing, providing feedback, and reporting on student learning. Third, professional engagement suggests that teachers need to identify their own learning needs. They also need to analyse, evaluate, and expand their professional understanding both collegially and individually. Based on these assumptions, the researcher suggests that these domain descriptors' focus should inform quality teaching components and the quality of professional development teachers should receive. Besides, "to ensure all students learn at high levels, educators must work collaboratively in professional learning communities and take collective responsibility for the success of each student" (DuFour, DuFour, Mattos, Eaker & Many, 2016, p.12).

DuFour, DuFour, Mattos, Eaker and Many (2016) suggested that professional learning communities should be "…an ongoing process in which educators work together in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve" (p.10). Hord (2009) supported this perspective. He confirms that learning communities offer teachers opportunities to regularly track their students' performance through a consistent and focused examination of multiple sources of student and systems data to examine all factors that could contribute to these results and identify the challenges. Subsequently, teachers can create new outcome statements for their students that address what causes their low performance. Accordingly, professional development should focus on the subject matter, student learning, and diversity of learners, planning instruction, instructional strategies, technology, learning environment, communication, assessment, reflective practice, student support and school improvement (Lave & Wenger,1991).

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Additionally, the domains suggested by the APST in 2014 explain that quality teaching occurs when educators, as teams, are involved in a cycle in which they analyse data, determine student and adult learning goals and design joint lessons that use evidence-based strategies. Therefore, to achieve professional development for English language and literacy teachers that improves students' reading and writing skills, quality professional development must be provided first in which teachers work and collaborate, professional learning communities appear to be essential for the teacher to improve student learning. However, many factors influence professional development quality and play an indispensable role in creating thriving learning communities (Steyn, 2013b).

2.3 Factors influencing quality professional development

Steyn (2013b) outlined some significant factors that impact quality professional development. These factors are teachers' commitment to change, learning styles and transformational leadership. This assertion suggests that it is essential that the whole process be carefully analysed to identify factors that will influence professional development effectiveness. The question that emerges is: how each of these factors impact professional development? Answering this question requires school leaders and teachers to renew and extend their commitment to serve as change agents. (Steyn, 2013b).

2.3.1 Teachers' commitment and shared responsibly to change.

The quality of any educational system depends mainly on teachers (Steyn, 2013b). Several aspects indicate teachers' commitment to change, such as motivation and morale. They need to be a lifelong learner who makes use of multiple sources of knowledge. They learn from practice, from students, and their peers. Also, committed teachers use the curriculum responsibly. Teachers committed to strive to meet all learners' needs and actively contribute to the profession by

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collaborating with other colleagues (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wittek & Habib, 2013). They need to revise the curriculum and think about how to facilitate and to make it relevant and enjoyable to meet students' needs best

2.3.2 Teachers' learning styles and professional learning:

Like students, teachers learn differently. Therefore, exploring the most effective professional development approaches for English language teachers, Hord (2009) suggested a practical approach for providing sustained and targeted support to teachers' learning through systematic, internally coordinated mentoring programmes. This approach supports a broader range of learning "preferences for learners". The use of the phrase "preferences for learners" (Liew et al., 2015, p. 76) reinforced that teachers have different needs and learn differently. They should engage in learning activities through formal and informal development discussions according to their learning styles. These learning styles impact their professional learning. How teachers approach a learning situation affects their performance and learning outcomes and determines how they acquire and process any information given in professional learning situations (Hilliard & Newsome, Jr., 2013). Literature has shown that optimal learning occurs if learners are taught in their preferred learning style (Liew et al., 2015; Rogowsky et al., 2020). Henceforth, professional development developers must consider how the learning is delivered rather than just adopting one approach.

2.3.3 School leadership role in professional development.

School leaders play a fundamental role in any reform efforts in transforming organisations in high-quality performance (Day & Sammons, 2013; Michael, 2014). They impact performance anywhere, on the processes of change, workforce commitment, and well-being. Thus, leadership is about influencing staff members' behaviour, beliefs and attitudes toward achieving the

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institution's goals. Research has indicated that there are different styles of leadership (Day & Sammons, 2013; Michael, 2014; Liew et al., 2015). One of these styles, instructional leadership, can contribute directly to the professional development of teachers. Thus, an instructional leader can help create a positive environment with shared goals and encourage teachers' communication to aid problem-solving. He or she has a significant role in creating and maintaining a collaborative professional learning culture by modelling the drivers such as professionalism in organisations (Australian Standards for Principals, 2011). Notably, the instructional leader is responsible for curriculum, teaching practices and the school environment. School leader roles can include responsibility for teaching, research, curriculum development and performance monitoring and development. Leaders are also expected to innovate and manage change, set direction, plan, and motivate and influence others. Further, they are expected to have professional knowledge and expertise valuable to colleagues and foster teamwork within the school (Hariri et al., 2014). Involving all school stakeholders in joint activities with shared goals is considered essential to significant professional development (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2007, p.354). This idea suggests that "what leaders think and do and how to interact with others has a profound effect on the level of performance of the organisation in which they work" (Sparks, 2002, p.12-1). Thus, school leaders need to engage other stakeholders in a collaborative learning process to make the desired change happen.

Matheson and Sutcliffe (2016) stated that there is a need for adopting pedagogical change to ensure that high education fulfils its educational purpose in responding to societal needs. As a result of that, the researcher thinks that responding to this changing and increasingly complex society demands school leaders and educators rethink many aspects of their practices to create learning experiences to prepare learners, whoever they are, for this changeable society. They need

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to review and analyse their responsibilities and administrative support levels to ensure that their priority is to improve their schools' learning rather than bureaucracy. Influential school leaders are recognised by their shared vision and goals direction. They are distinguished by professional leadership motivated by the desire to build a vibrant professional learning community. They seek quality teaching and work collaboratively for it (Sheppard & Dibbon, 2011; Alvallos, 2011; Michael, 2014; Bhanot, 2018). However, despite the identified roles of successful school leadership in enhancing and improving teaching and learning (Michael, 2014), the researcher thinks that school reform is not the sole responsibility of school leaders. Both school leaders and teachers have a fundamental role to play in the reform efforts in transforming organisations to high-quality performance (Sheppard & Dibbon, 2011; Alvallos, 2011; Michael, 2014; Bhanot, 2018). It is a matter of a shared process that requires collaboration between school leaders, teachers, students, and parents to improve student learning (Sharpe, 2013; Nelson, Maloney, & Hodges, 2017; Prado Tuma & Spillane, 2019).

This collaborative process is considered weak if shareholders are not bound by a shared responsibility to make the desired change happen (European Commission, 2018). All stakeholders should be part of the decision-making process when it comes to their professional learning. (Edwards, 1988; Mori, 2010; Kentucky Department of Education, 2014). This notion requires engaging teachers in designing the professional development programmes they need, rather than imposing tailored programmes or top-down approaches. Setting ready-made professional development programmes on teachers might lead to teachers' failure to benefit from such professional development due to lack of relevance (Freeman, Reynolds, Toledo, and Abu-Tineh, 2016). Teachers' willingness to reflect on the approaches they implement in their classrooms is more likely to change and improve their practices than reading about what someone else has

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discovered of his/her teaching (The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), 2002). A study conducted in the USA in 2016 by Bridich to examine teachers' and administrators' perceptions of education reforms finds that both teachers and administrators have areas of shared perceptions and significant divergence. Bridich claims that:

> "..Both teachers and administrators collectively desired to improve student learning, use teacher evaluations as essential teaching tools for educators, and be actively involved in the changes happening at their schools. Both groups believed that teachers and administrators perceived education reforms similarly. However, teachers' and administrators' perceptions differed significantly in how education reforms are implemented at their schools" (Bridich, 2016, p.1).

Uribe-Flórez, et al. (2014) supported this claim by stating that when teachers are aware and conscious of their role with their classes, schools, and communities, their ownership and commitment toward enhancing teaching and learning will increase. They suggest that principals maximise teachers' leadership by fostering collaboration in their school to support and encourage them to initiatives. Thus, transforming the professional development system requires promoting collaboration and knowledge sharing. Accordingly, there is a need to change the feedback loops' goals to gain more in-depth learning and a constant means for improved practice and development in this research site (Evans, 2010). By doing this, all the staff will start serving new functions, falling into new configurations, behaving in new ways, and producing new results (Uribe-Flórez, et al., 2014; Chi-kin Lee, 2004). It is essential to collaborate with other peers to understand and evaluate how the system works. Engaging teachers in collaborative learning communities may help them acquire the pedagogical knowledge required to improve students' learning. Teachers also need to own their professional education. They need to design the content based on their needs

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and their students (Ibrahim, Al-Kaabi & El-Zaatari, 2013; 2013; Zhang, Yuan & Yu, 2016; Schaap & de Bruijn, 2018).

Nevertheless, despite having recognised models of significant professional development for facilitating teacher professional learning, there remains a challenge for school leaders to put the required culture of school-based learning in place to better support teachers.

2.4 Professional development and teacher self-efficacy

In education, teacher self-efficacy is described as the driving power that enables individuals to transform the environment (Bandura, 1977). It is the belief in one's ability to realise a given aspiration (Mathews, 2005). Althauser (2015) stated that self-efficacy "is not merely a matter of how capable one is, but how capable one believes one is". He proclaims that self-efficacy is a driving power that influences teaching ability (p.213).

Gavora (2010) described self-efficacy as the teacher's personal belief inability to plan instruction and effectively accomplish instructional objectives. He viewed teacher self-efficacy as one of the factors that affect and specifically improve teacher effectiveness. Self-efficacy is associated with teachers' motivation, stress level and many other factors that guide teachers in their decisions about their teaching and their interactions with their students (Bandura, 1977; Ford, 2012). Self-efficacy appears to be strongly related to the teacher's competency.

A research study conducted by Alkan and Erdem in 2012 in Turkey examine the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and the competency of chemistry teachers revealed that teacher self-efficacy beliefs increase when the chemistry teachers' competency increases. Thus, "if teachers are left with no assistance in developing methods to improve and maintain a high level of efficacy, the result will be teacher burnout" (Ford, 2012, p.1). Consequently, teachers need support to develop the competency to perform well in the classroom. The researcher thinks that

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self-efficacy is obtained from the knowledge and skills teachers learn from professional development programmes. Training teachers on how to raise their self-efficacy will help them improve student learning. Vadahi and Lesha (2015) confirmed this viewpoint. They state that self-efficacy can be learned, and it should be facilitated by the professional development providers and school leaders.

Richard (2011) emphasised that teachers who do not possess the appropriate pedagogical knowledge find it more challenging to select and apply the suitable English language and literacy instruction strategies that improve students' learning. Therefore, improving teachers' capacities requires building their self-efficacy first by attaining the knowledge that makes them feel confident to do their job appropriately.

The five major factors that impact teachers' efficacy found in the study conducted by Ford (2012) in Cleveland in the USA include motivation beliefs, administrative support, teacher power level, teacher morale, and a teacher's teaching methods. Ford views these factors as possible causes that could significantly improve efficacy beliefs. Thus, the researcher thinks there is a close link between teachers' self-efficacy and the type of professional development they undertake. It is one of the "factors underlying their psychological well-being, including personal accomplishment, job satisfaction, and commitment otherwise they burnout" (Zee & Koomen, 2016, p.1). Therefore, it is very important that schools must pay attention to teachers' self-efficacy by offering opportunities for teachers to enhance their self-efficacy as it is related to their quality behaviour and practices inside classroom.

2.5 Models of teacher professional development**.**

Teacher professional development is viewed as the most critical component of teacher education. It represents the learning opportunities provided to teachers to promote their growth in

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a specific area. Gaibe and Burns (2005) claimed that these learning opportunities vary and take many forms and the possibilities for effective learning also vary in terms of common goal and quality However, professional teacher learning plays a critical role in supporting students' skills to succeed in the 21st century. Consequently, specific forms of teaching are required to develop student skills such as "deep mastery of challenging content, critical thinking, complex problem solving, effective communication and collaboration, and self-direction" (Darling-Hammond, Hyler &Gardener, 2017, p.1).

Literature (Gulamhussein, 2013; Freeman, Reynolds, Toledo & Abu-Tineh, 2016) has shown that many teacher professional development initiatives appear unsuccessful in supporting teachers' practices in student learning. There are some justifications for this claim. Firstly, teachers' needs differ from one context to another and from one discipline to another (Gulamhussein, 2013; Freeman, Reynolds, Toledo & Abu-Tineh, 2016). Secondly, different practice contexts create other demands. Though it is difficult to determine the efficacy of various types of professional development activities provided to teachers, there is a need to identify the features that make teacher professional development useful and meaningful. Thus, teacher professional development occurs on several different levels: district-wide, amongst teachers in a given institution, or individually (Gaibe & Burns, 2005)

Gaibe and Burns (2005) classified teacher learning opportunities into three distinct styles: district-wide, individual or self-directed professional development and site-based development divided into two following types that provide an overview of formal and informal professional development.

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2.5.1 District-wide professional development.

District-wide professional development is formal mandatory training of standardised professional development. Professional development providers use this model of development to circulate information and skills among large teacher populations (Gaible & Burns, 2005).It is recognised as a learning style for providing educators with a means to acquire necessary skills based on policy directions to address a more excellent vision of desired teacher practices. Richter, Kunter, Klusmann, Lüdtke and Baumert (2011) described district-wide professional development as" uptake of formal learning opportunities that deepen and extend teachers' professional competence, including knowledge, beliefs, motivation and self-regulatory skill" (p.116). They are characterised as structured learning opportunities viewed as mandated staff development with a specified program (Dogan, Pringle, & Mesa, 2015). They represent an approach of professional development, involving workshops and training sessions that commonly focus on the demonstration and modelling of skills (Gaible & Burns, 2005). Although district-wide professional development represents the traditional type of professional development assuming that teachers inform their knowledge and skills using workshops and courses, they are still the most widely used form of professional development in schools worldwide (Eurydice, 2008).

Though district-wide professional development is viewed as a useful approach for teachers learning, they only address what the centre feels is relevant, instead of focusing on teachers and students (Guskey, 2000 as cited in Mccarthy, 2016). Accordingly, some researchers regard it ineffective in meeting teacher professional needs (The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education - NCATE -, 2002, Freeman, Reynolds, Toledo, and Abu-Tineh, 2016) particularly teachers who seek to improve students who suffer from literacy and reading challenges. These researchers claim that imposing district-wide formal ready-made professional

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development programmes might lead to teachers' failure to benefit from such professional development due to lack of relevance (Freeman, Reynolds, Toledo, and Abu-Tineh, 2016).

2.5.1.1. Limits of district-wide professional development

There are many other disadvantages of district-wide professional development. They take place in training institutions hierarchically structured; thus, they do not offer networking opportunities for knowledge acquisition where network ties are central factors for enhancing knowledge sharing. They also do not allow time and space for reflection and knowledge translation (Bresnen, Hodgson, Bailey, Hyde & Hassard, 2014). According to Rucker (2018). District-wide professional development treats teacher teachers as passive learners. They happen periodically and cover various topics that might not be of teachers' need or interest. Besides, they do not involve ongoing support from development providers or offer teachers a chance to connect the content to their contexts to build understanding.

Freeman, Reynolds, Toledo and Abu-Tineh's study in Qatar in 2016 to explore the impact of teacher professional development on English language teachers indicates that district-wide professional development is irrelevant for teachers and learners' actual needs. They claim that district-wide professional development is determined by educational authorities and other external bodies not connected to schools. They are delivered in a fragmented way and characterised by a fundamental disconnect between what decision-makers intend and the professional learning teachers experience and need. They usually focus on the implementation of instructional practices as prescribed skills and knowledge designed by others, while the teachers' role is only to adapt these skills to their classroom situations (Wittek & Habib, 2013; Cheng, & Ko, 2009; Guskey, 2000).

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Gaible and Burns (2005) claimed that district-wide professional development negatively influences teachers' self and teaching efficacy. They urge that the content and the activities of this type of development are not structured to base deeper understandings and extend teaching skills for change. Fullan (2006) believed that formal professional development programmes do not address both teachers and students' actual needs and contends that the best model involves professional learning communities because they:

- Put teacher's learning at the centre of the learning process,
- May inform and influence the teacher's behaviour inside the classroom.

Given that these traditional approaches failed to bring the desired change in teachers' instructional practices and improvement in students' learning, administrators and teachers should find other non-traditional methods to professional development to build teachers capacities (DuFour, DuFour, Mattos, Eaker & Many, 2016). Galanouli (2010) indicates that sometimes teachers find conflict between the school and their own development needs and those professional development activities suggested (or required) by the local education authority" (p.6).

Furthermore, Fullan (2006) emphasised that most of the formal professional development programmes provided outside schools are not relevant. He makes a clear distinction between professional development and professional learning development. To him, professional development represents "workshop, conference, or other events that may or may not involve learning something new" (p.3). Consequently, the researcher contends that district-wide formal professional development is less significant and irrelevant to English language and literacy teachers' growth and students learning in this study. They are unlikely to be based on teachers' individual needs (Mizell, 2010).

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2.5.2. Individual improvement developments

Individual improvement professional developments are defined as self-directed learning development. They depend on teachers' efforts and ability to "take the initiative to identify their own learning needs and determine their learning goals" (3 Benefits of Adding Personalized Learning to Your Training Program, 2019). They are implemented to improve teachers' professional practices (Knowles, 1975, cited in Tekkol & Demirel, 2018). They are seen as a natural way to teach (Thornton, 2010). Researchers claim that learners can benefit a lot and reach their full potential when they access learning opportunities according to their own needs and learning styles (Thornton, 2010). Additionally, self-directed learners have to define the sources they need to learn, choose appropriate learning strategies and evaluate learning outcomes with or without help from an outsider. However, learners need to acquire several competencies to self-direct their learning to optimise its benefits (Knowles, 1980).

Knowles' theory of adult learning underpins individual improvement developments or self-directed learning. According to this theory, six norms are central for adult learners to guide their learning. They are: 1) self-concept, 2) experience, 3) readiness to learn, 4) motivation, 5), orientation to learning and 6) need to know. Knowles (1980), as cited in Servais, Lynne & Sanders (2009) suggests that "... the best practices in adult learning provide learners with principles of high levels of involvement in planning, experiential learning, relevance, and pragmatic application" (p. 1). As adult and self-directed learners, teachers tend to discover meanings by themselves in their personal and professional lives (Henschke, 2007). They see themselves as independent and have control and responsibility for their learning. They have enough experience to rely on rather than being taught to do specific assignments by others. Their expertise helps them link new and prior

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learning to test the validity of new ideas and how it fits; therefore, they check what they already know and discuss linking up new ideas to prior knowledge (Knowles, 1980).

2.5.2.1. Limits of individual development -self-directed learning (andragogy theory)

The theory of andragogy was subject to much criticism as a pure approach for adult learning. Bartle (2019) blamed Knowles for assuming that adults learn differently from children and that children's life experiences are of lesser value than those of adults the notion that andragogy should be used for adult learners and pedagogy for children is untenable. Darbyshire (1993) insisted that "it is myopic to claim that readiness is not an equally marked feature of children's learning" (p. 330). Moreover, Power and Bartlett (2015) asserted that critics could not differentiate correctly between andragogy as an "art" or a "science" as described by Knowles. They wonder whether andragogy is considered a valid, unified theory of learning, or merely practice, or applying an idea. Some questions arise about the ambiguity of whether the approach andragogy focuses on education or teaching. Kessels (2015) claimed that andragogy theory fails to acknowledge that individuals have many identities that may "affect their views of learning and ways of engagement in the learning process" (p. 12).

Nevertheless, due to his own professional experience, the researcher finds much to agree with in Knowles andragogy theory of adult learners. Adult learners from his perspective they do learn differently from children. Self-directed learning can be one of the development alternatives to make the desired change happen in English language and literacy education in the research site. This change may not occur if specific criteria and conditions are not available (Knowles, 1980). Learning is a social interaction (Bruner, 1966) in which teachers need to work with others, to ask questions, reflect on these questions and learn from the questions asked by peers learning the same subject. Thus, to become self-directed learners, English language and literacy teachers need to

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have the ability to take responsibility for determining their own learning needs. They need to have the ability to set their goals, to have the ability to plan, implement and evaluate their learning activities, and to have a high preference for collaborative or experiential learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Thus, working in teams (professional learning communities) is better than individual work because as contends, two heads working together are always better than one for solving problems.

2.5.3 Site based development (situated or school-based professional development)

Site-based development (Gaible & Burns, 2005) is a type of professional development where teachers interact in study groups or professional learning communities to improve their professional practices. This type of professional development focuses on the classroom base support that aims to prepare teachers to effectively use strategies known to enhance student achievement (Gaible & Burns, 2005). According to Gaible and Burns, 2005, this support "occurs primarily in the form of planning-teaching-debriefing cycles with individual teachers or teams of teachers at the same grade level" (p. 3). Working with a team of teachers promotes a "community of learners" among the staff so that teaching any discipline subject becomes a shared responsibility. Site-based professional development is concerned with establishing professional learning communities where teachers collaborate, reflect, discuss, and inquire about the issues they face in the classroom to improve them.

Stoll, Bolam, Mcmahon, Wallace and Thomas (2006) viewed professional learning communities as a group of people based inside and outside a school, who can mutually enhance each other's and pupils' learning and school development. Gaible and Burns (2005) defined professional learning communities as a group of educators who collaborate to learn, grow, and improve their professional practice to maximize student learning.

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DuFour, DuFour, Eaker and Many (2006) defined professional learning communities as "educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective reflective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve" (p. 217). They advocate that professional learning communities should pay attention to learning, not teaching.

Schumacher, Taylor and Dougherty (2019) described professional learning communities (PLCs) as a system of professional development (PD) in which small groups of teachers with shared interests work together with the goal of learning and improving their teaching (p.4). The essential idea of this type of PD is the concept of professional learning communities or communities of practice where teachers collaborate, inquiry, and reflect with peers on everyday challenges at the workplace. (The National Council of Teachers of English, 2006). Thus, site-based developments should be designed consistent with situated learning where the collaborative groups are centred on learning situations that increase teachers' professional knowledge and students (The National Council of Teachers of English, 2006).

Comparative studies between formal and informal teacher professional development on the impact of teachers' learning, reveals that reform for improving English language and literacy learning requires professional development that helps teachers create professional communities in their institutions to enhance student learning.

Gulamhussein (2013) asserted that "…professional development can no longer be about exposing teachers to a concept or providing basic knowledge about a teaching methodology. Instead, given that teachers are held accountable for students learning, professional development requires a "change in a teacher's practice that leads to an increase in student learning" (p.10). This perspective suggests that leading a significant role in students' education entails exposing teachers to different types and professional development models (Darling-Hammond, Hyler &Gardener,

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2017). However, this exposure should not be provided generically. It must be based on the identified needs of both educators and students (Roy, 2013). It also should range from "one-time workshops to online research, coaching, and collaborative time teachers spend together in professional learning communities (The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014, p.3). Consequently, teachers' dispositions to reflect on the approaches they implement in their classrooms are more likely to change and improve their practices than just reading about what someone else has discovered (The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, NCATE, 2002).

DuFour, DuFour, Eaker and Many (2006) claimed that professional learning communities should be ongoing, job-embedded learning for teachers to ensure and to achieve sustained improved learning for students. They should focus on results-oriented goal setting for each group member to achieve high learning levels for all students. Members of the professional learning communities should work collaboratively to achieve agreed-upon common goals focused mainly on student learning. Thus, professional learning communities are viewed as a "laboratory model for schools where teachers engage in collective inquiry to weigh their practices and innovations against empirical evidence and critical dialogue" (Wood, 2007. p.282). Teachers in professional learning communities should determine the topics they want to learn, and the approaches they want to use to gain knowledge. They meet to deepen knowledge and understanding in an area of interest. Such professional learning goes far beyond the formal "one-shot" workshop approach (Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Whitaker, 2018).

Researchers who support professional learning communities such as DuFour, DuFour, Mattos, Eaker and Many (2016); Hord (2009); OECD (2009); and Jones, Stall and Yarbrough (2013) confirmed that professional learning communities have many advantages to teachers'

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learning. They state that professional learning communities can help build productive relationships required to engage educators at all levels in collective, consistent and context-specific learning to address inequities in teaching and learning opportunities. They provide a supportive environment for educators. They support teachers by offering them the assistance they need and promote efforts to improve teacher practice and learning (Jones, Stall & Yarbrough, 2013).

Nevertheless, Fullan (1985) drew attention to an essential matter regarding school-based professional development. He claims that despite the powerful impact of context on teacher growth, significant school-based professional development should not be provided too much at one time. It should be delivered in small doses because it is a process quality more than a content quality that people interact over the practices that will best contribute to quality instruction (Fullan, 2006, p8). Cordingley et al. (2015) claimed that peer support is a fundamental element for effective professional learning; nevertheless, it is insufficient to change. They urged teachers to continue producing the same teaching practices if they are not provided with structured opportunities to engage with theory and practice. Thus, the researcher thinks that relationship in learning communities is not enough to make the desired change happen. Development providers need to maintain certain conditions to contribute to change. They should be aware of the shortcomings within the professional learning communities they created (Lave & Wenger).

Consequently, professional learning communities are characterised by a set of attributes previously mentioned such as a shared vision, and peer sharing (Hord, 2009; DuFour, DuFour, Mattos, Eaker & Many, 2016). These attributes help teachers challenge and critique their learning and teaching and build knowledge to enhance their performance and professional practices (Fullan, 2006; little, 2006). Professional learning communities offer teachers a chance to engage in shared work and to employ methods of inquiry, research, and reflection to look for knowledge and then

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implement what they learn (McGrath, 2003; Hord, 2009; DuFour, DuFour, Mattos, Eaker & Many, 2016). Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace and Thomas (2006) claimed that, developing professional learning communities appear to hold considerable promise for capacity building for sustainable improvement that guarantees continuing learning which is mutual and interactive (p.1). They assure that professional learning communities offer learners opportunities, as adults who know their needs, to share their beliefs, values, and vision of what the school should be (Hord, 2009). Thus, professional learning communities are considered influential contributors to staff development and are practical approaches for inspiring school change and improvement (McGrath, 2003; DuFour, DuFour, Mattos, Eaker & Many,2016; Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace & Thomas, 2006; Hord, 2009; Jones, Stall & Yarbrough, 2013; Killion,2015).

Clune and Mann (1991) contended that school-based professional development is limited because teachers cannot conceive the need for change and independently implement the desired improvement. However, researchers such as Galanouli (2010) confirmed the importance of school-based professional development as the best model of learning for English language and literacy teachers' professional growth. This viewpoint is also supported by Killion (2015), who suggested that when teachers engage in high-quality collaborative learning that they see as extensive and helpful, there is both an individual and a collective benefit. Such collaboration increases teachers' and leaders' responsibilities to ensure and enhance schools' quality by making these events effective professional learning communities.

The researcher assumes that significant school-based professional development features are consistent with Qatar National Professional Standards for School Teachers and Leaders (QNPSTSL) that have been adopted by the Supreme Education Council (SEC) in 2007. Some of these standards focus on the delivery methods for teacher professional development. For example, one common

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feature of QNPSTSL suggests that a teacher's professional development should be sustained learning about teachers' practice and respect them as lifelong learners (Supreme Education Council, 2007a). Besides, other domains of the QNPSTSL state that teachers and school leaders should be given opportunities to engage in professional development with other peers collaboratively and learn in the context of their practice (Supreme Education Council, 2007a). The QNPSSL requires teachers and school leaders to develop and use the skill of reflection to improve their professional practices (Romanowski, 2013). This idea entails that school leaders and teachers need analytical skills to identify, interpret and reach an informed decision on the actions to be taken in response to available data on teachers and students' performance (Supreme Education Council, 2007a). However, despite these claims, teachers in Qatari schools were not given a chance to grow professionally within their contexts in professional learning communities. They still receive formal professional development generically provided to them. They do not have opportunities to think, reflect and share ideas to improve their instructional practices.

2.5.3.1. Limits of site-based professional development

School-based professional development (professional learning communities) has many limitations if it is not implemented appropriately. Several misunderstandings and barriers exist and may impede professional learning communities' effectiveness, purpose, culture, and how it functions (Ibrahim, Al-Kaabi & El-Zaatari, 2013; Zhang, Yuan & Yu, 2016; Schaap & de Bruijn, 2018). Though teachers' professional learning communities' outcome improved teachers' performance and students' achievement (Stoll et al.,2006), teachers sometimes tend to focus on teaching aspect and forget to direct their shift to student learning. Thus, problems emerge when teachers in professional learning communities think only about teaching and not learning (Sargent, & Hannum, 2009).

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Furthermore, the inability to align teacher needs and organisational needs impedes the effective teacher teams' work on innovations (Schaap & de Bruijn, 2018). Another limit of significant professional learning communities in schools is the domination of school leaderships and lack of flexibility with staff members. Teachers may not feel ownership of their learning and thus fail to work for the common goal. Change resistance is also considered another barrier to effective professional learning. Sometimes teachers are worried by work that required them to exert extra effort (Ibrahim, Al-Kaabi & El-Zaatari, 2013).

2.6 Summary

Teacher development has different models. Some researchers give much value and credit to school-based professional development model over the other types. They urge that shared vision and commitment in school-based professional development will produce high-quality learning than district comprehensive professional development (Cheng & Ko, 2009; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Galanouli, 2010; Geraldo, 2014; Inasaridze, Lobzhanidz e& Ratiani, 2015; Freeman, Reynolds, Toledo & Abu-Tineh, 2016; Nasser, 2017). They emphasise that school site-based professional development could involve school leaders and teachers to develop a shared vision and understanding (European Commission, 2018). This shared vision strengthens teachers' and school leaders' ability to create active learning and teaching environment and collaborate to improve their school's learning conditions. This shared vision also paves the way for setting clear team goals, specific norms and culture that directs the organisation towards practical learning. If these norms and culture do not exist in organisations, they may cause obstacles to productive learning communities (Weber, 2011). Thus, based on the two forms (formal and informal) of development presented in the literature regarding teacher professional development's content and nature and its impact on teacher change, both teacher and student learning should be the focal point for the

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professional development providers. The nature and the content of teacher development should reflect teachers' values and needs as practitioners in the school about what should guide English language and literacy professional development programmes. Researchers claim that knowledge construction should be sought in social interaction and collaboration between individuals. This notion implies that the teachers' mutual commitment in the joint work could impact the English language and literacy teacher's performance in this study (Freeman, Reynolds, Toledo, & Abu-Tineh, 2016; Nasser, 2017). The researcher thinks that professional learning communities in the research site may allow the continuity and sustainability of teachers' learning within their context. It will help teachers focus on classroom challenges (Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardener, 2017)

2.7 Professional development and reflective practice

Reflection lies at the heart of professional teacher learning. It has become an essential concept for teacher development. It can be a valuable process in teacher professional development because it offers teachers an opportunity to examine their ideas and experiences of teaching, enhance self-awareness, and foster autonomy (Tran, 2016; Mathew, Mathew & Peechatt, 2017). Other benefits of reflective practice, as claimed by researchers, are the following: It enables teachers to gain a thoughtful understanding of their instructional practices. Also, it allows them to form a critical learning community where they can collaboratively test their decisions. Additionally, reflective practice can help both school leadership and teachers to explore their hidden identities and practice to strengthen them (Tran, 2016; Mathew, Mathew & Peechatt, 2017).It is very notable that when practitioners exercise reflective practice, they engage in a continuous cycle of self-observation and self-evaluation to understand their actions and the reactions they foster in themselves and learners (Cunningham, 2003).

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Pandey (2012), in her article "Reflective Practice: A Gateway to Professional Development" claims that a reflection is an approach through which teacher development takes place. It is the best way to explore teachers' hidden identity in a professional development setting (p.6). It helps teachers in expressing and justifying the concerns of their practice in an informed manner. Applying reflective practice in professional development will also help teachers advance their students' learning through critical inquiry within their professional knowledge and lead to changed and improved thinking and teaching. Thus, inquiry and critical reflection in contemporary education become essential parts in teachers' professional development (Mathew, Mathew, & Peechatt, 2017). It characterises teachers as learners. Critical reflection performance enables teachers to make sense of what we have learned and why we knew it. Moreover, it allows individuals to think carefully about their practices to make conscious choices, and to identify options about what to do to solve the problems they encounter in their work (Lave & Wenger, 1991)

Historically, reflective practice origins went back to Schon in 1983-1987. Schon (1983) divides reflection into two parts; reflection in action and reflection on action. Thought reflection in action, as Schon described, is the critical thinking process that researchers do concurrently with their efforts; at the same time, they are acting. It is a cognitive practice of observing how researchers think in action process and adapting their activities to the conditions of the change they are trying to achieve. Reflection in action offers researchers the opportunities to change, modify or reaffirm their approaches and continue thinking while the action is going on. Whereas review on action is a retrospective contemplation of practice. It is the reflection researchers do after the event has finished. Thus, reflection on action is an activity of reform or rebuilding experience based on what researchers can recall. It is a dynamic endeavour to look back into the experience,

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exploring it to understand what has happened by analysing and interpreting the information identified.

Nevertheless, Farrell (2007) stated that researchers have not yet agreed upon what reflective practice is and which type of reflection on practice necessarily promotes teacher development. There is still discussion on where reflective practice falls based on its nature of inquiry (Rolfe, 2002; Farrell, 2007; Finlay, 2008). There are also still questions, such as whether the individual work of professionals engaging in solitary introspection or engaging in critical dialogue with others remains unanswered (Finlay, 2008). Another problem raised by researchers is the lack of conceptual clarity surrounding the term ‘reflective practice (Kinsella, 2003). The study conducted by Tabassum and Malik in 2014 to investigate teachers′ attitudes toward contemplative practices in Pakistan reveals that teachers did not fully know the need to have reflective practices to comprehend the difficulties their learners face (Gheith & Aljaberi, 2018).

However, despite the critique, reflective practice is an empowering approach that uses dialogue and reflection to offer individuals real opportunities to think collaboratively for transformation through learning (Alidou & Glanz, 2015). It is a learning process in which stakeholders learn about self-reflection, critical thinking, and new ways of dealing with the problems they face and find solutions to improve their lives (Kunseler, Tuinstra, Vasileiadou, & Petersen, 2015). Thus, many researchers have sought to define what is meant by reflective practice.

Johnston and Badley (1996) referred to reflective practice as “the acquisition of a critical stance or attitude towards one’s practice and that of one’s peers” (p. 4). It is a state of awareness of the influence the researcher has on the people or topic being studied, while simultaneously recognising how the research experience affects the researcher (Gilgun, 2008, as cited in (Probst

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2015, P.37). It should also be associated with inquiry, reflection, and continuous professional growth (Harris, 1998).

Kahn et al (2006) viewed reflective practice "as a process carried out by professionals through which aspects of practice are both brought into consideration and adapted, involving the creation of meaning around that practice" (p.13). According to Larrivee (2008), reflective practice is a state of mind, an ongoing integral practice. It is a way of learning from one's own experience to inform practice. Larrivee claimed that reflective practice is a process of learning and evolving through investigating our practice. Also, Fontaine (2016), highlighted that "reflective practice is a process of critical evaluation and self-assessment whereby one deeply explores an event to learn from experiences and consequently undertakes a change in perception or behaviour" (p.1). Fontaine thinks that all actions are originated upon personal ethical values. These actions depend on what we do, rather than what we say. These assumptions suggest that approaching teaching, as a reflective practitioner work, involves combining personal attitudes and values into a professional identity (Larrivee, , p.293), to achieve the standards and the goals expected by profession.

In education, many researchers have recognised the reflective practice as an approach that could promote teachers' professional development and improve the quality of teaching and learning (Kahn et al., 2006; Larrivee, 2008; Mathew, Mathew & Peechatt, 2017). Larrivee (2008) emphasisedthe significance of reflective practice for teachers by claiming that if teachers do not develop critical reflection, they stay trapped in unexamined judgments, interpretations, assumptions and expectations (p.293). Therefore, Reflective critical thinking is considered an essential skill for teachers to enhance their profession.

Sellars (2012) declared that teachers have equal responsibilities like other schools to improve the learning process. Many challenges in their career face them; therefore, they have

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increased responsibility, accountability, and obligation to ensure all students' success. These responsibilities challenge teachers to reflect on how best to select instructional practices, understand student differences, and present content (p. 462).

However, there is no one approach to reflective practice (Kahn et al., 2006; Hewson & Carroll, 2016). Peer involvement and collaborative interaction are viewed as one aspect of reflective practice. Researchers such as (Mathew, Mathew, Prince & Peechattu, 2017) acknowledged reflective practice as an approach that could promote teachers' professional development and improve teaching and learning quality. Exchanging classroom visits and working together to discuss the challenges they face are the most basic research techniques teachers can employ to improve their instructional practices (Mathew, Mathew, Prince & Peechattu, 2017).

Moore (2010) added to the debate on reflective practice by providing three attributes of thoughtful individuals, which are still important for teachers today: "open-mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness" (p.1). By open-mindedness, he means the desire to listen to more than one side of an issue and give attention to alternative views. By responsibility, he refers to the careful consideration of the consequences to which action leads, and by wholeheartedness, he indicates that teachers can overcome fears (p. 40). Therefore, the essential assumption underpinning the choice of reflective practice in this study as a tool to think about and investigate teachers' development problems is the practicality and effectiveness of the approach (Tran, 2016; Jones.2014). Tran (2016) asserts that the goal of reflective practice is to observe and refine technique continually. Thus, reflective practice in education is recognised as a tool to address specific and general institutional and societal goals (Tran (2016). Mathew, Mathew & Peechatt (2017) stated that reflective practice plays a central role in teachers' professional development. It facilitates teaching, learning and understanding. Teaching as a multifaceted process requires

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teachers to question their practices to improve and to increase learner performance. A fundamental justification for reflective practice as an essential part in teachers 'development is that experience alone does not necessarily lead to learning; deliberate reflection on experience is critical (Mathew, Mathew & Peechatt, 2017).

This thesis's fundamental argument is that reflecting on the challenges that meet school leaders and teachers daily is not a solo work. All staff members are held accountable to participate in a learning process to solve these challenges. Thus, school administrators and teachers can rely on reflective practice to solve their workplace problems (Bolton, 2009; Sellars, 2012; Fontaine, 2016). Besides, it can help all staff members to grow professionally and improve student learning. Hence, the researcher thinks that employing a reflective practice approach to investigate professional development challenges in the research context can help that end. It can best support teachers to solve English language and literacy instruction challenges through negotiation and dialogue.

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CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher introduces the theoretical framework that guides this a study and justification for using it concerning teacher professional development in school-based professional learning communities (PLCs) in his context. To do so, he will propose a rationale for the choice of Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated theory of learning, and the school-based professional development model and examine its relevance to his research. Next, the researcher will explain how he develops his conceptual framework based on situated learning theory's critical characteristics and a summary to conclude that the chapter will be given at the end of the chapter.

This study is guided and informed by two theories: Lave and Wenger's situated learning theory (1991) and constructivist social learning theory (Bruner, 1966). These two theories are critical in understanding teachers' experiences and engagement in professional development activities. Because situated learning is based on the concept of social learning, a sense of theory Burner's constructivist social learning theory (1966) will prove useful.

3.1 Constructivist social learning theory (Bruner, 1966).

The constructivist social learning theories' central concept lies in the assumptions that knowledge is a human product, and it is constructed in a cultural and social context. These theories claim that both teachers and learners should engage in an active dialogue to create their knowledge. During this engagement and interaction process, learners examine and evaluate the knowledge and ideas they have undergone. This learning may be adopted by learners and ultimately becomes a part of their professional education and identity and, consequently, applied to a new situation (Bruner, 1966; Vygotsky, 1978; Bundra, 1977). Thus, constructivism theory's main implication is that education's essential goal is to facilitate learning and problem-solving skills that can be transferred to various situations, rather than just conveying knowledge.

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This study views teacher professional development through two theoretical frameworks: situated learning – school-based development (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and social constructivism (Bruner, 1966). The views of andragogy (Knowles, 1980), and school instructional leadership theory (Ismail, Don, Hussein & Khalid, 2018) will also help inform this study.

The concept of school as a learning institution appeared in 1998s in business, then to school as a learning community in education. It moves school to a learning setting where all stakeholders can learn together and improve the school goals. The researcher contends that this concept utterly fits with Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning. They view a school as a learning organisation with a shared vision that encourages all staff to collaborate to achieve the school goals. When a school becomes a learning organisation where teachers interact in professional learning communities and invest time and other resources for student learning, educators' effectiveness increases and improve all students. Thus, this study adopts the situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991) as a practical perspective to view professional teacher learning.

3.2. Rationale for selecting Lave and Wenger's theory of situated learning (SLT)

There are many learning theories in education such as Behaviourism, Cognitivism, and Constructivism from Pavlov, Vygotsky to Piaget and Bloom to Maslow and Bruner all with their different concepts and principles of how people learn. However, for this study, the researcher draws upon the arguments that situated learning theory claims active education requires knowledge embedded in authentic contexts of practice.

Lave and Wenger (1991) suggested that learning is situated in a specific context and embedded within a particular social and physical environment. Learners learn within a community of practices who understand the nature of the knowledge they want to learn through observation, collaboration and reflection. Thus, the learning dimensions of the situated learning match well

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with the heart of active education in schools. Professional learning communities are considered significant inspirations for professional teacher learning (collaboration –interaction –reflection) that the researcher identified and discussed in the light of constructivism and the andragogy learning theories.

3.3. Lave and Wenger's learning theory and its applicability to this research

Lave and Wenger's (1991) learning theory draws the researcher's attention as a leading theory for its relevance to his research. However, Lave and Wenger's work featured novice teachers' development within an authentic context, but this is not to say that it cannot apply to experienced teachers' professional development. Using Lave and Wenger's situated learning theory in this study is based on the nature of collaboration, interaction and reflection dimensions of the model. Situated learning theory encourages reflection on learning that places learners in the experience and focuses on application rather than imposing knowledge from top to down. In addition to emphasising higher-order thinking rather than mere acquisition of facts. This theory stresses that learning occurs through dialogue with others in a professional learning community (Dufour and Eaker, 1998). The researcher believes that this is the learning process that English language and literacy teachers need to solve daily problems they face in the classroom. Situated learning is viewed as an approach to transform schools into communities of practice or professional learning communities and extend classrooms, pedagogies, and curricula into practitioners' communities that enhance learning for students and teachers (Mullen, & Schunk, 2011). Accordingly, the researcher assumes that the school, as a learning organisation, is an appropriate environment for creating learning communities as a practical approach for English language teachers' professional growth. The basis for this view is evidence-based research that considered professional learning communities (Dufour & Eaker, 1998) are central to teacher

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professional learning and growth and a vital element for significant professional development and reform initiative (Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 2012, p. 3).

The idea behind situated learning is that no teacher on their own can ensure learning for all students (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Therefore, teachers should work collaboratively in their context to achieve this goal. Professional learning communities impact teachers' learning (Dufour & Eaker, 1998; Pothem, 2012; Steyn, 2013b). Thus, the researcher believes that the English language and literacy teachers in the research site might benefit from participating in these professional learning communities when learning is situated at the workplace. The knowledge they generate in their context with their students' needs will help them rethink their instructional practices for their students' benefit. As a result, the quality of classroom pedagogy may improve considerably, and the gap of students' underperformance in the English language may be closed (Louis & Marks, 1998).

Moreover, research has also shown evidence of improved learning, commitment, and professionalism of teachers who work together in learning communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Lave and Wenger asserted that situated learning or school-based professional development programmes can best meet teachers' concrete needs. They claim that situated learning provides "an opportunity to all school members to be involved in professional development activities any time they need it" (p.65). It also encourages teachers to create new knowledge and to improve their instructional practice. Moreover, researchers like Fullan (2006); Alvallos (2011); and Postholm (2012) confirmed that school-based professional development, as situated learning, is meaningful to teachers' professional knowledge because it allows room for teachers' voice to be heard at the workplace.

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Dass and Yager (2009) cited in McCarthy (2016) identified several significant elements regarding situated learning as a practical activity for teacher professional development and student learning. They highlighted that significant professional learning communities indicate that:

> " a) learning must be contextually based and tailored to specific groups of teachers, b) training must provide a lengthened duration of learning, c) school site-based training should focus on specific populations, d) outcomes should be focused on student needs, e) learning opportunities should be provided at both at the district level and school level, f) teachers should have control over what they are learning, g) active learning activities should be a part of every training opportunity, h) teachers should be able to shape what they learn to fit their classroom needs, i) adult learning principals should be embedded in the curriculum design, and j) every training's effectiveness should be measured by the improvements made in teacher practice and student learning" (Dass & Yager (2009) as cited in McCarthy (2016), P.15)

Based on these assumptions, the researcher believes situated learning in school is far better than the research site's English language and literacy teachers. The English language teachers need to be part of a learning community where there is a culture of evidence-based practice and collaborative professional learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991: Premier & Parr, 2019) rather than attending formal mandatory professional development.

3.3.1. Key core characteristics of situated learning

Lave and Wenger (1991) developed situated learning theory claiming that individuals learn best through active participation in their context. Situated learning theory is divided into three core characteristics, as shown in the figure below. They are legitimate peripheral participation,

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Community of practice, and the knowledge presented in authentic contexts. That is to say; a situated learning context provides coaching, support and scaffolding for individuals. It also provides opportunities for collaboration, social interaction and reflection on practices, leading to generating significant knower for professional improvement.

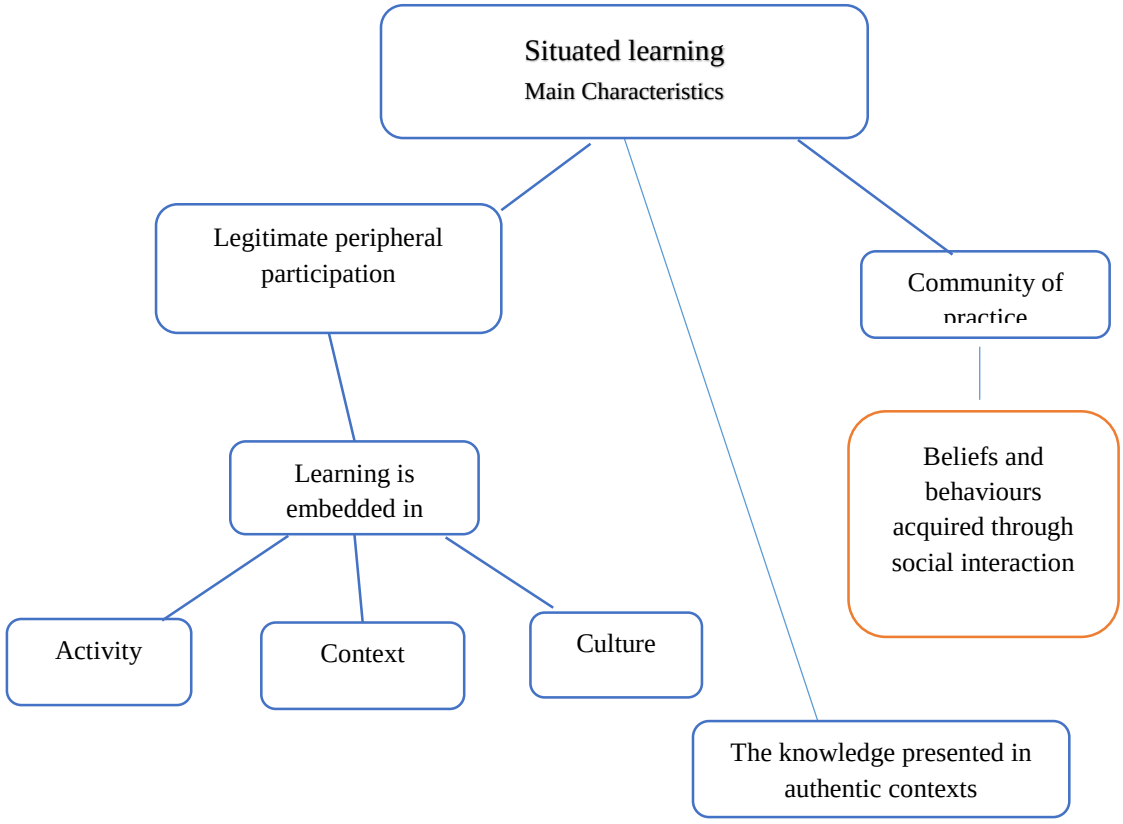

Figure 1. Situated Learning Theory (Lave & Wenger.1991).

Explaining these characteristics will inform why weight is given to professional learning communities as a practical approach for teacher development over formal mandated professional development provided to teachers. The researcher will then summarise these core characteristics into operational concepts that reflect the main components of situated learning theory to present his abstract concept of professional teacher learning.

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Lave and Wenger (1991) referred to legitimate peripheral participation as to how individuals participate in social activities. When they become comfortable in their social context, they move gradually from a peripheral state to the full involvement in their learning context. By the community of practice, Lave and Wenger mean how the communities of practice impact individual learning and shape their perspectives. Moreover, by the knowledge presented in an authentic context, Lave and Wenger denote that education should engage with real problems in the field. Consequently, the researcher argues that the three characteristics explained above help him develop his conceptual framework, as shown in Figure 2 below, in which he will analyse his data. He will mainly be focused on the knowledge presented in authentic contexts.

3.3.2 Researcher's conceptual framework based on situated learning theory

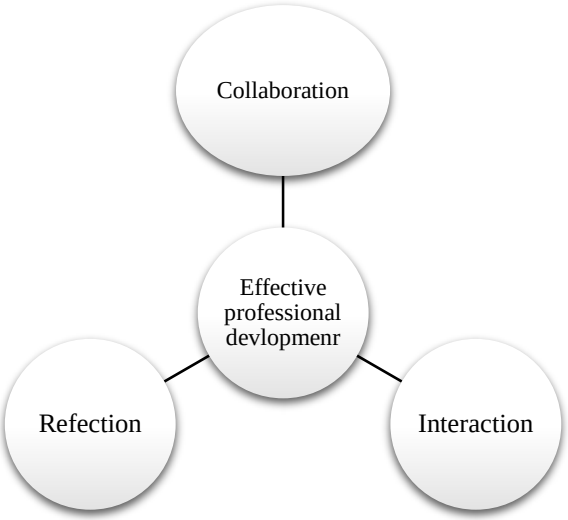

Figure 2. Researcher's conceptual framework

The researcher viewed the main concepts of situated learning of collaboration, interaction and reflection as the missing circles in the professional development provided to the English language and literacy teachers in the research site. He sees that for the English language and literacy teachers in the research site to reach practical outcomes requires them to collaborate,

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interact and reflect on their performance at the workplace to become problem-solving practitioners (Mathew & Peechattu, 2017).

Lave and Wenger (1991) asserted that the context of significant professional development should address problems of practice. It should engage teachers in the concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation and reflection that guide learning and development processes. Also, they claim that the content of significant professional development should focus on what students are to learn and how to support student learning. They also, urged that the structure of effective professional development should be supported by modelling, coaching and collective solving specific problems of practice. Thus, professional development providers should treat teachers as they expect them to treat students (Burstow, 2009).

Additionally, teacher learning in effective professional development should be grounded in inquiry, reflection and participant-driven experimentation. They further contend that teachers should be responsible for creating their knowledge. Treating teachers as active learners who construct their understandings is considered another feature that can significantly inform and improve professional development. Subsequently, instead of external representations about what to do about their inner world (Burstow,2009), situated learning might support the English language and literacy teachers in this study to collaboratively construct meaningful knowledge to solve the problems they face in a career.

3.3.2 .1 Collaboration.

Research asserts that situated learning environments provide learners with the opportunity to explore their challenges collaboratively and reflectively that yields meaningful knowledge and rich learning situations (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

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Schumacher, Taylor and Dougherty (2019) described professional learning communities (PLCs) as a system of professional development (PD) in which small groups of teachers with shared interests work together with the goal of learning and improving their teaching (p.4). This assumption fits very much with constructivism (Bruner, 1966) which assumes knowledge is a human creation that is socially and culturally constructed. Individuals can create meaning when they interact with each other within the environment where they live. Constructivism also underlines that meaningful learning can occur when learners are engaged in social events through interaction and collaboration to improve their practices. This claim reinforces the notion that situated learning involves linking learning and context (Lave & Wenger (1991). Teachers meet to deepen knowledge and understanding in an area of interest. This meeting implies that teachers in professional learning communities determine the topics they want to learn and the approaches they want to use to gain knowledge. Thus, as an academic leader in the research site, the researcher considers professional learning communities a "laboratory model in schools". They allow teachers engage in collective inquiry to weigh their practices and innovations against empirical evidence and critical dialogue to gain necessary knowledge that enables them to increase students' academics in the English language.

Easton (2008) and DuFour, DuFour, Mattos, Eaker and Many (2016) claimed that getting educators together in a learning community can best help them gather evidence, develop and implement strategies to address their concerns. They can analyse these strategies' impact and apply what they learn to next the cycle of improvement. They define professional learning communities as the process of learning together to help educators build their capacity to create powerful learning communities that serve their goals. Mizell (2010) also, suggested that active professional development should be ongoing, relevant, sustained, collaborative, future-focused and practice-

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based. Mizell claimed that "…professional development is most effective when it occurs in the context of educators' daily work" (p.7). It offers teachers a chance to interact with experienced ones to reflect on their instructional practices and the workplace's teaching problems. They can also work together to identify the solutions to these problems, and then apply them to address students' needs. Sanchez Marquez, Lopez Sanchez and Ortega Valera (2013) also concurred as a result of a research study they conducted in Spain which aimed to design and implement a holistic teacher training programme for engineering professors. They found that professors develop their teaching competencies very well when universities promote professional training programmes that involve them in educational innovation processes inter-regulated by academic peers who have experience in innovation and research in engineering education. As a result of that, they positively influence their students' learning processes (p. 828). In support of these views, Hunzicker (2010) asserted that for professional development to be active and meaningful, it should engage teachers in learning opportunities that are supportive, job-embedded, instructional-focused, collaborative and ongoing.

The Institute for the Advancement of Research in Education (2004) asserted that active professional development should address student learning needs. The Institute for the Advancement of Research in Education also confirms that meaningful PD should incorporate hands-on technology use, and be job-embedded. Besides, it should have an application to specific curricula, address knowledge, skills and beliefs. It should also occur over time, happen with colleagues and provide technical assistance and support to teachers (p.2). Parr et al. (2018) again, support the notion of collaborative learning. The study conducted in New Zealand to identify effective teaching and professional development practices revealed that teachers learn best and tend to construct new knowledge for themselves when they work with other colleagues (Meissel,

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Parr, & Timperley, 2016). They also discovered that teachers are more likely to engage at a deeper level of learning when they participate in setting their personal goals, understand how to monitor their progress, and have the support to make the appropriate changes in their practices.

Moreover, the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education stated that high-quality professional development should:

> " a) improve and add to teachers' knowledge of the academic subjects they teach, and help them to become highly qualified teachers; b)continual, rigorous, and classroom-focused to leave a significant permanent impact on teachers' instruction and performance in the classroom; c) be research-based to increase student's academics or continually increase the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers; d) be sponsored by school divisions or other entities experienced in providing professional development activities to teachers; e) support all learners to succeed including children with special needs and limited English proficiency; g) train teachers in how to use technology so that its applications are effectively used in the classroom to improve teaching and to learn in the curricula; h) promote the use of data and assessments to improve instruction, and I) be reviewed for high quality and evaluated after completion to determine if the intended results were achieved" (The Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Education, 2004, P.2).

Thus, a significant number of research studies (Collinson et al., 2009; Mizell, 2010; Kennedy, 2016; Hunzicker, 2010; Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017; Meissel, Parr, & Timperley, 2016) firmly emphasised that active professional development must have a definite impact on teacher professional practices.

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3.3.2.2. Interaction

Interaction allows learners the opportunity to communicate during learning situations. Significant professional learning communities requires building a relationship, mutual trust and respect amongst learners. Thus, they foster a positive environment for learning because learning cannot be successful if learners do not trust each other and respect each other's differences (Steyn, 2013b). However, though interaction is an essential element in professional learning situations, it is not enough to produce deep learning. Thus this interaction is significant for teacher professional development as they need to build a strong relationship and trust first to learn from each other.

3.3.2.3 Reflection

Reflective practice plays a central role in teachers' professional learning (Sellars, 2012). It is a process that enables teaching, learning and understanding. Accordingly, a situated learning context requires teachers to reflect upon knowledge to solve problems in the field. Solving these problems requires, predicting, hypothesising and experimenting in a collaborative group to produce a solution. This process implies that refection is a key factor in situated learning as it enables teachers to develop and transform concepts into abstract. (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Herrington & Oliver, 2000; Kolb, 1984; Bell & Mladenovic, 2014; Kalinowski, Gronostaj & Vock, 2019).

Collinson et al. (2009) claimed that active professional development must lead to changes in teacher's practices. This viewpoint is supported by (Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017). Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner (2017) viewed active professional development and planned and well organised professional learning that results in teacher practices changes that lead to improvements in student learning outcomes. They contend that formal professional development represents a subcategory of the range of experiences that may result in professional

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learning but may not lead to real change in teacher learning. Thus, for teacher learning to be more appealing and meaningful, it should incorporate reflection on practice in a collaborative learning context as an essential factor that leads to action (Lave & Wenger, 1991). For effective professional learning to be meaningful, teachers should engage in reflective practice and seek opportunities to incorporate reflective practice into their professional practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Kinsella, 2003; Farrell, 2007). Reflecting on teachers' approaches in their classrooms represents the most crucial aspect of professional learning communities where reflective practice plays a central role in teachers' professional development (Mathew & Peechattu, 2017). Collaboration and reflection on practices that occur in professional learning communities infer that "the contexts and processes of learning are central to what is learned knowledge is contextual. Instead of focusing on individual cognition only, the focus should be on 'interactive systems that include individuals as participants. They should interact with each other and the materials and representational systems (Saigal, 2012). Such professional learning goes far beyond the formal "one-shot" workshop approach that has been widely criticised (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). The collaborative and reflective practice among colleagues of the same discipline allows room for networking and knowledge acquisition where network ties are recognised to enhance knowledge sharing. It also provides time and space for reflection and knowledge translation (Bresnen, Hodgson, Bailey, Hyde & Hassard, 2014). Informal activities in professional learning communities should occur in schools allowing teachers to gain new knowledge through collaboration, observation, exploration, daily practice and reflection. It also empowers them to manage the content and the delivery methods of their learning (McCarthy, 2016).

However, reflective practice is not easy to adopt. There are various ways in which reflection is perceived (Brookfield, 1995); hence, it requires training and patience to implement effectively.

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Findings of a study conducted in Gaza in 2011 by Ostaz to examine how primary school science teachers employ reflective practice to solve educational problems they may face in the classroom indicate that the levels of reflective critical thinking are below expectation "below 70%" (Gheith, & Aljaberi, 2018). The development of crucial thinking competence can be a challenging process for teachers. They need to devote a significant amount of time to understand how to use reflective practice effectively and professionally. Kinsella (2003) claimed that "different authors frame reflective practice and its applications in noticeably different manners, emphasising one dimension of the theory while ignoring another" (p.1). This claim implies that the process of reflective practice at the personal level can be directly influenced by how a person engages with the mission (Kahn, Young, Grace, Pilkington, Rush, Tomkinson, & Willis, 2008). Consequently, this misconception may lead to confusion among practitioners and educators.

3.3.3. Limits of situated learning

Critics such as Billett (1995), and Amendum and Liebfreund (2019) claimed that Lave and Wenger's situated learning theory does not fully account for how learning happens. It focuses only on learning that occurs inside the classroom or the school as authentic, ignoring learning outside school or classroom. It is imperative to consider that learning outside school has the same significance as what occurs inside the school. Essential knowledge can be obtained from interacting with others outside school (Billett, 1995; Drew, n.d). Situated learning theory does not acknowledge objectivity in learning. Adult learners can acquire knowledge independently without social interaction.

Moreover, inappropriate knowledge could result from situated learning in the workplace. Billett (1995) stated that not all knowledge obtained in the workplace is required or leads to proper development. Situated learning theory does not acknowledge creative individuality. It does not

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recognise that creative learning requires new ways of thinking that can be found outside school instead of the standard methods within social groups. Another limitation of Lave and Wenger's situated learning theory is that it emphasises learning as a progression starting with the beginner who evolves into a full participant (Fuller, Hodkinson, Hodkinson & Unwin, 2005).

3.4. Summary

As a result of the literature review consulted in this study, several teacher professional development models emerged within the actual evidence that it can enhance teachers' professional learning when applied. Models of formal and informal growth and associated outcomes were analysed according to these two models. Then they were examined to determine the best model for significant professional development that could enhance teachers' professional knowledge and improve students learning in English language and literacy skills.

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CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology chosen to examine participants' perception of the impact of different professional development models on their instructional practices in details. It includes the research design, data sources, study population, sample size and sampling techniques, besides participants' engagement, data collection, data gathering tools and data analysis methods. Additionally, the researcher's positionality statement and the ethical considerations will also be discussed.

4.1. Research aims

This research study is situated in a middle school in the northern part of the State of Qatar. The study's primary focus is understanding English language and literacy teachers' experiences regarding professional development in the research site's English department. The research study has three main aims: i) to explore and evaluate the impact of the current professional development programmes compared with professional learning communities development ii) to identify the reasons that impede the improvement of English language and literacy education in the school, and iii) to determine the critical features of an effective professional programme design to improve English language and literacy learning and teaching in the research site. He used qualitative research to study these English language teachers' experiences (Creswell, 2012).

4.2. Research questions

To achieve the research aims, the researcher developed the following questions to guide the research study:

1. What are teachers' initial attitudes, beliefs and practices about English language and professional literacy development?

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2. What are the needs of the English language and literacy teachers in the school, and how does teacher professional development address these needs?

What model of professional development is most appropriate to the needs of our literacy teachers?

4.3. Rationale for a qualitative approach

This research study explores how English language teachers perceive professional development provided to them and how these experiences impact their instructional practices. The study also seeks to identify what professional development model is appealing and responsive to teachers' needs to improve English language and literacy instruction. Therefore, qualitative research was utilised in this study because of the specific characteristics that make it useful to researchers who want to understand people's experiences and turn them into usable data (Creswell, 2014; Ayres, 2019).

Qualitative research is described as a design used to answer how and why questions, explore the topic and present a detailed view of these topics (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, the researcher's motives for choosing a qualitative design are consistent with Creswell's description. Creswell (2014) pointed to some core characteristics that define qualitative research. One of these features is its nature. He asserts that qualitative research occurs in a natural setting. Researchers usually incline to collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the subject or problem under study.

Moreover, the qualitative approach's descriptive nature allows researchers to gain a holistic picture of the topic under investigation in the research context and capture the essence of a phenomenon by themselves (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). In this respect, Creswell (2014) refered to the researcher's role in the research study by proclaiming that researchers collect data

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independently. They can develop their instruments for collecting data without relying on readymade instruments designed by other researchers. They can also examine many documents in the field, observe people' behaviour, and conduct interviews. Besides, in qualitative research, the researcher's focus is to gain meaning and ideas that participants hold. These meanings are of significant concern to researchers. Another merit of qualitative research is its flexibility (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Researchers can change the research plan, the research questions at any time they think would serve the end they are seeking. Besides, qualitative research offers researchers an opportunity to collect many data types, such as documents, observations, interviews and audio-visual information instead of taking data from a single data source.

Moreover, qualitative research allows researchers to develop a big picture of the problem by detecting almost all the factors involved in the context. Additionally, researchers can analyse data inductively and deductively. Researchers may get all the data needed by going forth and back during data analysis to look for more evidence to support their obtained themes. Finally, in qualitative research researcher should stand aside and think critically to evaluate their role in the study how this role impacts the research process (Creswell, 2014). Based on these assumptions, by using qualitative data, the researcher wanted to gain detailed insights into teachers' experiences, views on content knowledge, and professional development that affects their performance in teaching English language and literacy skills. Such opinions and experiences also helped the researcher reinforce the meaning teachers made from their professional development experiences. Hence, hidden factors that caused students' underperformance in English language and literacy learning could be detected.

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4.4. Philosophical positioning

Understanding the world around us requires the choice of appropriate design and methods to guide a study (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Jilcha Sileyew, 2020). Understanding the phenomenon under investigation requires the researcher to become more familiar with different ways of knowing to discover social research knowledge. Choosing the appropriate approach best suited for the research questions is paramount. Believing that, people experience, identify, interpret any phenomenon in the world from their point of view, the researcher contends that, exploring the professional development of English language and literacy teachers for his study through the qualitative lens would permit a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. A deeper understanding can be obtained through a conceptual framework that puts much weight on "subjective reality" of the English language and literacy teachers' professional development experiences.

4.4.1. The research process through the researcher's position

The researcher's current position in the research site is that of an academic affairs vice principal. He supervises all teachers of different disciplines in the school. His work includes increasing students' academics, assisting the principal in fostering the school vision and mission, implementing and reviewing data related to school-wide common assessments, leading and developing professional development program for staff, and overseeing the development and the implementation of the curriculum. Their vision of ensuring that no one of their students should be left behind (No Child left behind Act of 2001) requires his efforts to provide quality learning by producing quality classroom teachers. Simpson et al. (2004, p. 69) urged that "the central and overarching theme of NCLB is accountability, including accountability for positive academic outcomes and related results"; thus, the researcher believes that quality PD programmes would produce quality teachers led him to investigate this connection further. Henceforth, the

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researcher's observations within schools could inform policy in improving teacher professional learning.

As an academic affairs vice principal responsible for teacher's professional growth, the researcher values professional development programme PDP as one of the relevant approaches to empowering teachers to become quality educators by creating an effective professional learning environment. The researcher often engages staff in professional development PD activities and encourage teachers to do likewise. The main concern in this research is the professional growth of the English language and literacy teachers. Thus, the researcher's focus as an academic affairs vice-principal and professional development responsible is seeking effective professional development to enhance English language and literacy teachers' capacities and competence. This focus theorizes the use of "effective educational practices based on scientifically based research" (Simpson et al., 2004, p. 69). Therefore, the researcher wondered about the opportunities for improvement that English language and literacy teachers can make through the useful professional development patterns discovered in the literature. How might English language teachers in the school benefit from this development? This question became of interest to him. As a school leader, the researcher contended that he had to take a more facilitative role to help English language teachers become lifelong learners. He needed to setting goals and reflecting on and assessing their learning; however, this dual participative role is generally associated with a subjective interpretation of data (Jones, 2001). This role might cause what is called the researcher's bias and distort the research process. Therefore, to conduct this research in which he would seek to engage the English language and literacy teachers as participants in this research, he was aware that his position and identity can impact the research process (England, 1994) and that participants might be vulnerable. As an insider researcher and a member of the administrative board, the researcher was aware of

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the participants' trials to provide ideal information which did not cope with reality. He did not want to bring his personal view into the research or obtain information from participants under pressure and at the same time, act following ethical considerations.

Research from Mantzoukas (2005, p. 282) claimed that "qualitative studies are based on a Wittgensteinian understanding of the inseparability of the subject/object condition and therefore require that researchers reflect upon those subjective elements that they bring into the study". To be ethically sound, the researcher of this study as insider needed to avoid the impact of his dual role, as a researcher and a school leader, on the participants and provide credibility for the research process. Addressing this challenge requires changes in how the researcher, as an insider, participates in the research to safeguard participants from being vulnerable. He adopted "prospective reflexivity" (Dixon, 2020) to maintain ethical commitments (Sultana, 2007) and provide objectivity and validity to the study by continuously evaluating his role and his potential effect on the study.

According to D'Silva et al. (2016), reflexivity requires a researcher to consider how his/her background, personal values, and experiences affect what they can observe and analyse. The researcher needed to reflect on his role during the research process to help him gain insights to verify their credibility and research validity by protecting the participants' rights (England, 1994). Thus, he kept a self-reflective diary with him throughout the research study. The self-reflective journal helped him self-criticise his role in the research and made sure that his research role had no impact on participants' opinions. This process also helped the researcher capture the participants' voices accurately and produced more accurate accounts of their lives (Mantzoukas, 2005).

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Moreover, the researcher's notes in the self-reflective journals supported him to analyse his role as the research progressed. He recorded his observations, views and interventions during the interview sessions and PD document analysis. This process was essential to safeguard his stance as an insider researcher and to add credibility of his research (Attia & Edge, 2017).

4.5. Research paradigm and rationale of adopting it

Interpretivism has been used in education research since 1970. It is one of several paradigms of analysis adopted by researchers to investigate social phenomena. As a research approach, Interpretivism claims that researchers cannot study knowledge related to human and social sciences using the same techniques of studying physical sciences. In social and human sciences, people interpret their world and then act based on these interpretations, whereas the physical sciences researcher does not (Hamersley, 2013). Thus, the researcher's epistemological position is that knowledge is not only "objective". It is not found in statistics only, but it is also "subjective", it can be found in the world around us, in the stories of people and their experiences and even in visual data or pictures (Matthews, 2011). The researcher's epistemology is like that of a fisherman who studies fish species. He has to enter into the water, establish rapport with the fish and swim with them, striving to understand their experience of being in the water. He does not incline to stand on a riverbank observing the fish's general tendency to describe their behaviour as they swim around without getting his feet wet (Taylor, & Medina, 2013). Therefore, the researcher as interpretivist believes that knowledge about English language teachers' and their professional growth in the research site is shaped through a continuous interaction process by immersing himself within their experiences of teaching and development programmes.

The researcher believes in interpretive research paradigm (Taylor & Medina, 2013) for many reasons described in the next paragraph. His philosophical stance of knowledge develops

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from subjective observation at the detailed description and deep understanding of human experience. Subsequently, he believes that he can best understand teacher professional development phenomenon by putting himself in the situation, interact with teachers and listen to their experiences to extract knowledge from it (Hardy, 2015).

The researcher argues that the interpretive approach is suitable for addressing this study's research questions and the phenomenon under investigation: teacher professional development. This phenomenon is deeply rooted in the English language and literacy teachers' experiences and needs in the research site. He tends to understand the English language and literacy teachers' professional development programmes in the research study (Creswell, 2007; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Modern Interpretivism highly values this "subjectivity" as an essential method in interpreting and the inquiry process of studying peoples experiences (Taylor & Medina, 2013; Pham, 2018).

Given that the purpose of this research project was to explore the best model of teacher professional development for English language and literacy teachers more fully, a phenomenological framework (Husserl, 1980) was used to investigate the impact of current professional development programmes compared with professional learning communities on teachers' instructional practices.

4.6. What is Phenomenology?

A phenomenology is a research approach intended to find the essence and meaning of a phenomenon (Patton, 2002). It is described as a common qualitative research approach to explore the experiences of an activity or concept from the perspective of a group of people (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2012). It is exclusively positioned to help scholars learn from others' experiences (van Mann, 2017). However, there are two different types of approaches to studying

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individuals' lives. They are descriptive phenomenology (Husserl, 1980) and hermeneutic phenomenology (Heidegger, 1962).

Descriptive phenomenology (Husserl, 1980) focuses on studying individuals' lived experiences within the world (Neubauer, Witkop & Varpio, 2019). In contrast, the hermeneutic approach (Heidegger, 1962) focuses on existence which opens up the future. It describes its activity of choosing, and doing, and how the future will be. Thus, it is vital to go beyond solely descriptive accounts of the lived experience to research these experiences' in-depth understanding.

Van Mann (2017) stated that reflecting on people's lived experiences and interpreting them is very important for understanding. Therefore, investigating into "other people's experiences and reflections on these experiences to understand the deeper meaning or significance of an aspect of human experience" (p.12), requires in-depth scrutiny in the accounts produced by participants, then reflecting on and interpreting these experiences to gain many insights from them. Subsequently, suppose Husserl's descriptive philosophy is to see the world from others' experiences, without changing it. In that case, Van Mann suggests that the mere description of individual experiences is not enough to understand people's whole experience. Accordingly, if we listen to other peoples' experiences and understand them, we need to reflect on these experiences, interpret and draw conclusions from them. Therefore, van Mann's hermeneutic approach (2016) is employed as the best approach to inform this study.

In this study, the phenomenon is the English language and literacy teachers of the research site within professional development programmes. Understanding the participants' experiences and interpreting their pedagogical practices is an essential component of this qualitative research. By "experience", the researcher means something that happens to us rather than the accumulated knowledge that we mastered due to our learning (Henriksson, Friesen & Saevi, 2012) as the

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mandatory professional development experience participants had undergone. Therefore, to address this purpose, hermeneutic phenomenology rather than descriptive phenomenology is used.

This study's focus was to gather data regarding the research participants' perspectives about the phenomenon of the apparent growing failure of mandatory professional development in improving teachers' instructional practices and students' learning outcomes. It also focuses on the contribution of professional learning communities on participants' professional learning.

The in-depth description of participants' experience regarding the professional development they undertook during the interview and the focus group sessions, and their reflection on this experience during the workshop's sessions was used to create a thematic representation of the study findings' model of participants' knowledge. Understanding the English language and literacy teachers' professional development experience in this research site is crucial if professional development providers and school leaders address teachers' pedagogical knowledge needs more effectively. Importantly, central to this study is a reflection on practice. Reflective practice has become a fundamental tool in professional development to learn about their training and experience (Bolton, 2009; Sellars, 2012; Jones, 2014; Fontaine, 2016). It is a deliberate and mindful reflection about one's experiences and self-evaluation of feelings, decisions, understandings and actions, leading to professional learning development for professional practice (Hegarty, 2011).

As a research approach, Hermeneutics always suggests a sustained investigation process, description and reflection on the experience as it is lived. Butler (1996), also, claimed that professional development must be self-directed and that thinking is the dominant process for integrating knowledge and experience rather than an externally prescribed process. He urges that the focal point of reflection involves examining values, beliefs, goals, visions and practices.

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Therefore, the rationale for focusing on the reflective practice process in this study is that it is a critical factor in hermeneutics that helps bring participants' perspective in the planning and designing effective professional development programmes to improve English language acquisition literacy skills. Thus, the researcher used the hermeneutic approach to understand participants' lived experiences in the school context.

There are different models of reflection that can be used by researchers to reflect on their practice. All these models are cyclical. However, the researcher used Gibbs (1998) levels of reflectivity framework for its clarity and simplicity to aid the participants and the researcher as practitioners in reflecting on the current professional development plan to help design an effective professional development programme in the future.

4.7. Research design

The researcher selected a qualitative approach (Creswell, 2014) as a research design for this study. As mentioned before, the qualitative approach is aligned with the interpretive approach to understanding the complications of teachers' professional development experience. Additionally, the selected qualitative research design helped to ask questions about what and how this experience occurred. The chosen qualitative method also helped discover what views participants held about the mandatory professional developments. How are these professional developments aligned with their needs? How they viewed and perceived another model of professional development compared with the mandated professional development, they used to attend.

Qualitative method is an all-inclusive inquiry that involves collecting in-depth and rich data (Stake, 2010) through multiple data collection sources, including interviews, documents, reports, and artefacts (Harling, 2002). It is not limited to a single source of data. The credibility of

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qualitative research emerges from having multiple sources of data. Thus, the researcher used a variety of techniques to obtain the data.

As illustrated in Figure 3, below, this research's core component followed the sequence of two phases. Before these two phases commenced, the researcher chose the appropriate sample. Then, in Phase 1, he conducted individual interviews and a focus group. The researcher used thematic analysis to analyse the information gathered from the interviews next, in Phase 2, the professional development document was investigated in a collaborative, reflective workshop. Also, the researcher used thematic analysis to analyse the data collected from reflective journals. When reporting the findings, the interviews' qualitative data was integrated with the qualitative data obtained from the document analysis to confirm or disconfirm topics.

4.7.1. Participants/ sample size

The researcher selected this purposive sample because he wanted to access a particular subset of teachers with shared characteristics in their professional development. The number was kept deliberately small and accessible for ease of data collection. Moreover, the group chosen were well-informed with the problem being studied and were already seeking to improve their students' English language and literacy skills. Thus, they could also be considered as beneficiaries of the study. The researcher aimed to generate meaning and insights from the findings by exploring this purposive sample's perceptions and professional development experiences. Ultimately he wished to provide a useful model of professional learning responsive to their needs.

By using this sampling method, the researcher was able to secure and recruit participants that provided in-depth, rich information for the study.

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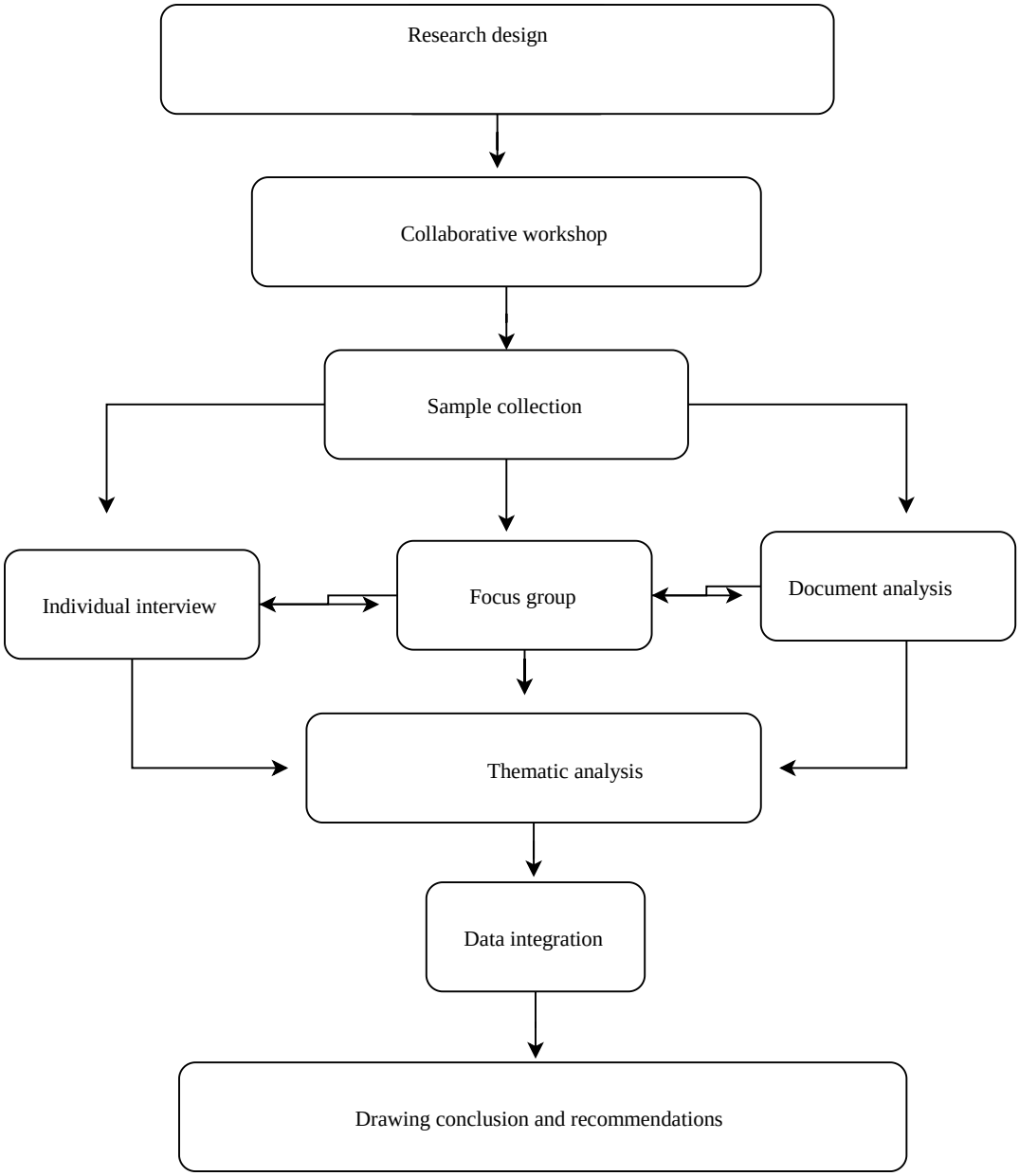

Figure 3: The research design map.

4.7.2. Demographic information

The research was conducted in a middle school for boys in Qatar; therefore, all participants were male teachers. Their ages ranged from 29 to forty-nine with the average age being 30. Participants' qualifications were as follows: BA (n = 3) and License of Arts which equalise BA, but without teaching license (n = 12). This process was fundamental to ensure that the collected

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data was as closely aligned as possible to address the research questions. They all attended mandatory professional development for English language and literacy teachers outside school. To better understand this study's context, the researcher described the demographics were shown in the table above. The data displayed in Table 1 showed the characteristics of the participants. They were displayed in terms of gender, job description and years of service in their current school, besides, their level of education. All participants were males. Each participant was given a nickname. They were being referred to by pseudonyms: Nadir, Samy, Osama, Ali, Saber, Emad, Fahad, Taha, etc. for privacy as shown in the table below. These names had no relationship to the participants' original names but were selected randomly. Their work service in their existing schools ranged between 0 to 7 years. This data showed that some teachers had more experience than other teachers. It was significant to point out that the experienced teaching staff might create a more effective school environment for learning. What was remarkable was that participants held different types of undergraduate certifications. Only three of them had a certificate in English education. The other twelve participants had Bachelor of Arts (BA) in English that equalises bachelor in English education but without preliminary Teaching License.

4.7.3. Data collection methods

The researcher used individual interviews, focus group and document analysis for obtaining data from participants. This data intended to understand participants' experiences with two types of professional development they underwent to determine which model of action might differ in their learning and teaching experience.

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Table 1 Participants' demographics

Participants	Job Title	Experience in current school	Level of education
P1 = Nadir	Teacher	0-3years	(BA) in English
P2 = Samy	Teacher	3-6 years	(BA) in English
P3 = Osama	Teacher	3-6 years	(BA) in Education
P4 = Ali	Teacher	6+ years	(BA) in English
P5 = Rafat	Teacher	6+ years	(BA) in English
P6 = Sayed	Teacher	0-3 years	(BA) in Education
P7= Fahad	Teacher	0-3 years	(BA) in English
P8 = Omar	Teacher	6+ years	(BA) in English
P9 = Taha	Teacher	0-3 years	(BA) in English
P10 = Mohy	Teacher	0-3 years	(BA) in English
P11 = Awad	Coordinator	6+ years	(BA) in English
P12 = Saber	Teacher	3-6 years	(BA) in English
P13 = Hafez	Coordinator	3-6 years	(BA) in Education
P14 = Bakry	Teacher	3-6 years	(BA) in English
P15 = Emad	Teacher	3-6 years	(BA) in English

4.7.3.1. Individual interviews

The purpose of interviewing in qualitative research was to collect data that is relevant to the research questions. Data collection for this research took place over several months. The researcher approached participants in a variety of ways using his position as an insider researcher. This step took several phases. The researcher set a timeline for data collection. Data collection took several stages as it is shown in the paragraph below. In the first stage of data collection, participants were emailed a letter providing critical information about the study. Then, they were

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invited for one-hour semi-structured interviews. Invitation for interview session occurred through participants' email addresses and personally. These individual interviews were conducted with fifteen English language teachers. The Interview sessions started immediately after obtaining consent from the thesis board of the University of Liverpool. These sessions took one month to finish. Relevant information about participants' experiences by directly questioning or talking to them (Creswell, 2013; Woods, 2010) was crucial. Moreover, the research questions entailed examining and understanding these experiences to evaluate the professional development programmes provided to participants by the development centres regarding English language and literacy teaching (Freeman, Reynolds, Toledo, & Abu-Tineh, 2016; Nasser, 2017).

One of the tools used by the researcher to collect data was semi-structured interviews. The reason for using semi-structured interviews was the flexibility they offered to probe the interviewees by asking them new questions based on their responses. The researcher employed one - on – one semi-structured interview (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005), using a responsive interviewing style which allowed him to hear the data from participants directly in a friendly way (Rubin, & Rubin, 2011). As a result, semi-structured individual interviews helped the researcher to collect rich and in-depth detailed information from participants about the topic under investigation. However, semi-structured interview are problematic. The presence of the researcher during the interview might influence the interviewee's responses. He might unconsciously ask questions that lead participants to the preferred responses. Moreover, when coding the data obtained from the interviewee, there is a high probability that coding becomes a selective process in which the researcher chooses information that may not be of interest in relation to the interviewee and therefore has no significance for the research. Also, the researcher may miss a lot of information the interviewee makes, especially the jokes and the contradictions he shows during

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the dialogue, and thus the researcher loses a lot of important and necessary information (Madill, 2011). Importantly, data findings in this study would be analysed and discussed in two parts.

4.7.3.2 Focus group interview

The researcher chose to conduct a focus group interview after finishing the individual interview sessions. Focus groups are a qualitative data collection strategy. They are popular in research in recent years because they are as a methodology can provide results quickly (Liamputtong, 2011). They are a group interview of approximately six to twelve people who share similar characteristics or common interest. Focus groups are considered suitable for conducting qualitative research because the key aim of a focus group is to describe and understand meanings and interpretations of the selected group of participants to understand a specific issue from their perspective. Liamputtong described the focus group by stating:

> Focus groups put control of the interaction into the hands of the participants rather than the researcher. Focus groups provide an opportunity for researchers to listen to local voices. A focus group is a research tool that gives a 'voice' to the research participant by allowing him or her to define what is relevant and essential to understanding his or her experience. In this way, the focus group methodology will enable researchers to pay attention to the needs of those who have little or no societal voice (Liamputtong 2011, p. 5)

Therefore, the researcher facilitated and guided the group based on a predetermined set of topics (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005) to understand participants' experience about the professional development they undergo. The researcher created the environment that encouraged the participants to share their perceptions and points of view. Thus, participants freely and responded to the dialogue, particularly those who could not express their thoughts easily. Consequently, the

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researcher could capture the participants' shared lived experiences quickly (Liamputtong, 2011). However, the researcher's main concern is that being an insider researcher, his official position might make him seek favourable results for the research study. One of the problems is the participants' inability to exercise the right to criticize things that they do not like during the research process for fear of the researcher's official status, which detracts from the value of the research. Another concern is that the information he will display may reveal much of the participants' data and identity through his name associated with the research site. To avoid these concerns, the researcher applied all ethical standards by not using his official position to obtain information from the participants through a third party. To preserve the data's confidentiality, getting this information is only completed after receiving written permission from the participants themselves.

The researcher conducted the focus group in-depth interview immediately after individual interviews were interpreted by major themes collected from the personal interviews. The purpose was to understand issues and concerns emerging from the individual interviews' themes. The researcher explained his role to the participants as a moderator who would direct questions to the groups only and record what they say for data analysis. Building up confidence and rapport often generates rich data that further develop the interview (Turgo, 2012; Prio, 2017). To that end, the researcher used clear guidelines explaining to participants that all views were welcomed and respected. There were no right or wrong answers, but rather only differing points of view. The researcher used opened ended questions. He avoided the closed questions that give yes or no answers because they are leading items that might include or imply the desired responses to the questions when writing them down (Barthel & Fortson-Harwell, 2016). The focus group offered a chance to share personal and professional experiences with others about English language and literacy education. The researcher used an audiotape recording device to record the interview

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sessions. Then, he started transcribing the interviews immediately after all the interview sessions had finished.

4.7.3.3 Document analysis

Researchers can use a plethora of tools to collect data. Besides, interviews .focus group and other data collection tools, document analysis is a useful data source in qualitative research. It is often used in combination with other qualitative research methods to triangulate (Bowen, 2009). Bowen defines document analysis as "a systemic procedure for reviewing and evaluating document" (p.27). Therefore, it is an accessible and reliable source of data (Bowen, 2009; O'Leary, 2014). Document analysis may take various forms, including some, but not limited to, books, diaries, journals and event programmes.

One of the reasons why researcher uses document analysis as a method for data collection is that document analysis is a well-organised and practical way of gathering data because documents are controllable and concrete resources (Bowen, 2009). They help researchers to "triangulate the claims about their project because it allows them to refer to multiple sources and to combine this document review with, for example, interviews" (Bowen, 2009, p.28). This act enables them to ensure research credibility. Thus, the researcher of this study used document analysis for data triangulation for two reasons. First, to understand the English language and literacy teachers' professional development programme in this study. Secondly, to avoid "the accusation that the study's findings are simply a single investigator's bias" (Bowen, 2009, p.28).

The professional development plan was an essential document for data collection. It included the protocols and the procedures used for providing professional development to the English language and literacy teachers in Qatar. After obtaining permission from the school administration, the researcher collected the professional development document from the school

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system and sent it to participants to explore its content and register their notes using reflective journals.

The researcher held a workshop to examine and analyse the PD document. It was a collaborative, reflective, and practice workshop. Participants used reflective journals to record their observations and remarks. The data obtained from these workshops offered the researcher much more insights about participants' perceptions and experiences regarding their professional development and professional learning.

During the workshops, the participants were guided to focus on their learning that resulted from professional development programmes they attended. They had to describe their thoughts and feelings towards the two types of professional development programmes. They also had to register if there were any skills they developed due to the two incidents. If so, what were they and how they would apply them in their professional practices? Participants were also led to reflect if there were areas of knowledge or skills they needed to develop.

Further, participants had to register the similarities and the differences between the two models of professional development in addition to anything they would like to know in the future. They had to give specific examples for English language content they expect to focus on in future professional development. The following questions guided this stage:

1. What prompted them to prefer either of these developments?
2. What new skills, information, or understanding have taken away from these two professional development types?
3. What did they learn about themselves as teachers through these professional development experiences?

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4.8. Data Analysis

Data analysis was an active part of this qualitative research. It was a very complicated process and confusing for the researcher at times due to its shapeless nature. The qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews and the PD document in this study were subjected to thematic analysis.

Braun and Clarke (2006) defined thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data (p.79). SAGE Publications expanded the definition of thematic analysis by giving it more details. It described thematic analysis as such:

> "…a systematic approach to the study of qualitative data that involves identifying themes or patterns of cultural meaning; coding and classifying data, usually textual, according to themes; and interpreting the resulting thematic structures by seeking commonalities, relationships, overarching patterns, theoretical constructs, or explanatory principles. Thematic analysis is not particular to any one research method but is used by scholars across many fields and disciplines" (SAGE Publications, Inc, 2010, p.2).

This merit has given it an advantage over other types of data analysis methods (Braun & Clarke 2006; Alhojailan & Ibrahim, 2012; Clarke & Braun, 2013; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Alhojailan and Ibrahim (2012) asserted that using thematic analysis in a research study provides flexibility for approaching research patterns in two ways, inductive and deductive manners. They add that by using an inductive approach most of the data that is collected will start with" explicit content and then move to broader generalisations and finally to theories" (p.41). However, Hyde (2016) assures that a deductive approach helps researchers see if these generalisations apply to specific cases. Alhojailan and Ibrahim stated that this process makes the thematic analysis more

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appropriate for analysing the data when the research's aim is “To extract information to determine the relationship between variables and to compare different sets of evidence that pertain to different situations in the same study" (p. 39). These implications show how important and useful the use of thematic analysis for making the research study trustworthy. In addition to being a practical and flexible analytic method that provides rich data from participants, the use of thematic analysis helps researchers to make sense of the irrelevant material. It also enables researchers to precisely determine the relationships between concepts better, compares them with the reproduced data and get insights from the gathered information (Alhojailan & Ibrahim, 2012). Consequently, a "…well-chosen and well-implemented methods for data collection and analysis are essential for all types of evaluations" (Peersman, 2014, p.1).

Moreover, qualitative researchers recommended thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013) for its flexibility as a data analysis method. This flexibility impels that thematic analysis is not tied to an epistemological or theoretical perspective because it is a method rather methodology (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). This flexibility of thematic analysis also allows the researcher to choose his approach to data analysis. To analyse the data-driven by research questions, theoretical analysis, or by focusing on data results (a bottom-up) inductive analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To that end, the researcher applied thematic analysis to all his data sources. The flexibility of thematic analysis enabled the researcher to quickly identify the data patterns and promptly address the research questions. That is to say; the researcher was a more bottom-up process rather than top-down.

Inductive thematic analysis was used to interpret data and capture exciting themes from the collected data. The interview records and participants reflective journal was central. Thus, the researcher used inductive thematic analysis to establish meaningful and useful insights from the

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data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; SAGE Publications, Inc, 2010; Alhojailan & Ibrahim, 2012) enabling him to identify any significant patterns and similarities within data.

Qualitative research can produce rich and thick data. Thorne (2000) suggests that to generate this richness, the researcher "…must engage in active and demanding analytic processes throughout all phases of the research" (P. 68). Coffey & Atkinson (1996) also assert that data analysis process should not be perceived as a separate stage of research; instead, it is a cyclical reflective activity that should inform data collection, writing and further data collection (p.6). Thus the researcher adopted an ongoing and rounded analysis strategy to focus on what should be analysed. That was why the data analysis of this research went through different stages.

Before converting the recordings of the interviews to Microsoft Word files, the researcher started by listening carefully to the full recordings; he does not miss essential data while listening carefully to the audio recordings. The researcher wrote down any ideas that appeared of significance for data analysis. Then, he read and re-read the data carefully to get familiar with the entire body of the data before going any further. While reading the data, the researcher took notes and wrote down his impressions about it. After having understood the data thoroughly, the researcher started by transcribing the data in a verbatim form. Transcription process was a challenging task. It took several hours to complete a one interview session of 45-minute length; nevertheless, the researcher could carry out initial data analysis. During the transcription process, the researcher added comments to go back to the latter. Body language and facial expressions (Oliver, Serovich & Mason, 2005) were lost during transcription because of unclear representation of the language that emerged during listening to the recordings. Then, precoding the data started by cleaning and reducing it by finding significant participants' quotes or relevant passages to address the research questions (Salanda, 2013). Once conducted, the interviews' data were

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thoroughly analysed to identify unique themes, as stated by the participants, based on the research questions. The researcher started by analysing individual interviews first, then, he conducted focus groups data analysis and finally, he examined and analysed the participants' reflective journals about professional development plan.

The researcher conducted the coding process electronically and manually. "NVivo software" was used for conducting coding of the interviews data electronically. Each unit of data was assigned to a unique code word or a phrase that described the patterns obtained. The analysis of the data involved a coding process in letting essential themes to emerge. The coding process involved three main phases: initial coding, focused coding and thematic coding. The initial coding stage involved a careful analysis of the transcribed data, including the interview notes. Then, in the concentrated coding stage, the data was reviewed considering the initial coding to allow substantial and repeated themes to emerge. Finally, the most critical identified themes were further developed and examined to determine the participants' data connections. Thus, the emergent themes were used to explain the research questions and discover areas for future study.

After identifying key themes and concepts in transcriptions, the researcher developed a template coding that helped him address his research reflexivity. Codes are generated after an initial analysis to identify critical perceptions. The researcher used highlighter of different colours during the coding process to mark relevant data to determine which ones became reoccurring phrases or themes. In the beginning, themes identifying process resulted in 25 reoccurring themes. Then the researcher revised them and reduced them to 15 themes.

The researcher adopted notes taking alongside the transcription process to return to the latter to link data within fifteen interviews. These notes helped the researcher connect similarities or differences in participants' data and highlight any reoccurring themes and enable the researcher

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to classify and cross out irrelevant data. Then, he started analysing data by categorising it into key concepts. The researcher compared the emergent ideas in term of similarities and differences and exploring reasons for them.

Data collected from reflective practice was processed and transcribed the same way as the qualitative data from individual interviews and the focus group. The researcher used the exact steps of thematic analysis applied to data collected from interviews and focus group on analysing participants' reflective journals. To make sure that the transcriptions' content was accurate, the researcher gave each participant a copy of his personal transcribed interview, reflective journals, the focus groups sessions in which they participated and the notes taken by the researcher to review and check their information. They were asked to report any inaccurate information they found and did not mean for research validity. Moreover, after determining the emergent themes, all participants were asked to review the key themes revealed to ensure the study's credibility.

4.9. Summary

The information provided in the previous section detailed the researcher's epistemological and methodological choices to address his research questions and produce research that was valid and credible. A qualitative exploratory approach (Creswell, 2014; Ayres, 2019) was chosen over other research designs and methods. The professional development of English language and literacy teachers was a phenomenon of interest in this study. The Interpretivism qualitative paradigm and data collection methods and procedures together with the measures the researcher took enhanced the trustworthiness of the study findings (Cutcliffe & McKenna, 1999).

4.10. Ethical Considerations

Ethical concerns are considered to be one of the most central parts of the research. Bryman, and Bell (2007) confirm some points as critical issues related to ethical dilemmas in research. They

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claim that researcher must know that respect of research participants should be prioritised. They should not subject to harm in any way; an adequate level of confidentiality of research data and privacy of research participants should be ensured. Moreover, anonymity has to be safeguarded. It is crucial not to permit any representation of potential sources of participants' data to a third party. Also, to clarify any possible conflict of interest, participants' consent should be obtained before the study starts. If the research fails to respond to these ethical aspects thoughtfully, the research process will run into privacy and moral concerns.

Taking these concerns into consideration, the researcher sought permission from the school administration to conduct the research. The researcher's dual role in the school as an academic leader and researcher could have generated some ethical issues. This dual role might make participants vulnerable. The researcher was meticulous when he accessed any data related to participants. Then, after obtaining permission from the school administration and approval from the Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC) of University of Liverpool (UoL) to proceed with his research, the researcher contacted the intended participants and sent them the Participants Information Sheet detailing all the information needed about his research. It helped to explain their rights before, during and after their participation in the study. (Appendix A).

Additionally, the researcher sent the participants a consent letter to sign if they agreed to participate in the research. The letter also explained the nature and the purpose of the study. It included contact information of the researcher and the thesis supervisor and the Participant Research Advocate at the University of Liverpool. Participants were informed that participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and they had the option to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The researcher confirmed that participants' information in the research study would not be disclosed to any third party. Any information concerning them obtained by the

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researcher would be protected through anonymity and confidentially according to the Data Protection Act (2018, c.12).

Anonymity was maintained in all the phases of the research. No information was used to reveal either participants' identities or their institution. Audio recordings and transcriptions were stored on a particular drive held in a secure location and were accessible only by the researcher. Data was not transferred to a flash memory device or operated in public spaces. Participants were also informed that all papers containing personal details were kept in a locked file separate from other research materials, which only the researcher could access.

Further assurances were given that their names or other personally identifiable information would not be used to report the findings. All data relating to the participants would be destroyed three years following completion of the study. All interviews were conducted in a private room not used by other staff members and at a time of participants' choice. Furthermore, to directly address the researcher and participants' possible power imbalance, the researcher explained the protocols governing the individual interviews and the focus group sessions. Participants were assured that the researcher was only interested in their opinions and experiences, which would be respected regardless of what they were. The opportunity to withdraw from the research at any time without penalty was reiterated. If participants felt their rights were violated or their career progression was jeopardised, it was made clear that they could contact the thesis supervisor or the Participant Research Advocate at the University of Liverpool for help. Moreover, further information was given to participants that as the research study was to be conducted within the school, the school administration would review the research's ethical and moral plan to ensure that the researcher had applied the highest standards of ethical practice.

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According to Fleming (2018) “one of the initial challenges of conducting insider research is to ensure that the research design has rigour and transparency in the methods of data collection. Fleming clarifies that it is important for an insider researcher to minimise any likely criticism about being biased” (p.313). Thus, the researcher acknowledged that this role might cause bias to the research study. Nevertheless, he was bound by ethics rules (University of Liverpool code of ethics, EdD Thesis Handbook, 2017). Therefore, the researcher made every effort to remove any researcher’s bias that could impact the study's teachers' participation. Subsequently, to limit theses biases and other ethical concerns, the researcher would reflect continuously using reflective journals to continually analyse and evaluate his own experiences against those of the participants. This activity would help make the researcher more aware of how his experiences could sway the findings (Creswell, 2013). Considering all the ethical considerations, the researcher nevertheless stressed that their valuable insights would help generate new knowledge to improve teaching and learn in their discipline.

4.11. Researcher’s engagement in the study

As an academic leader in the research site, the researcher believes that he has a role to play to improve students’ underperformance in English language and literacy learning. He supported teachers to succeed by setting clear directions and protocols of work to guide them forward. .He also assisted them to understand their roles in engaging collaboratively with staff members to think together about problems that challenge critically. He established a good foundation of collaborative work to track performance and progress of students. Consequently, in this research study, the researcher engaged with participants at two supervision levels: collaborative and directive (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2007). The engagement was determined by the readiness level of participants (Hersey and Blanchard, 1988).

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Hersey and Blanchard (1988) claim that leaders need to change their styles to the followers and their abilities to guide them toward achieving the institutional goals. Therefore, to determine the extent of research participants' ability to participate in the study and whether they are familiar with research requirements, the researcher selected the appropriate style of leadership and supervision to engage them in an effective collaborative, reflective practice (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2007). Accordingly, the researcher's engagement in the study varied between directive and collaborative approaches. Sometimes directive control behaviour was applied when participants were functioning at a shallow developmental level or did not have the Knowledge to act on an issue considered vital to the reflection process. On other occasions, the researcher used the collaborative method (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2007) to clarify, encourage or reinforce participants when they were functioning at mixed developmental levels or had approximately the same degree of expertise on the issue under investigation. Table 2 explained the supervisory behaviours applied by the researcher during the reflective practice workshop. The following table depicts the level of participant engagement in the research process.

Table 2 Researcher's level of engagement-supervisory behaviours.

Tasks	Directive	Collaborative	Rationale
Workshop week 1 Reflective practice activity 1: • Introducing and describing the research problem. • Explaining the reflective practice process. • The researcher is clarifying any misunderstandings.	√		The researcher's expertise in the research process as an academic principal to prioritise challenges is held responsible for exploring critical incidents and proposing essential educational science as research for education (MacDonald, 2012).
Workshop week 2 Reflective practice activity 2: • Registering thoughts and feelings about the two models of professional development • Exploring instructional practices considering English		√	"Knowledge is socially reconstructed and co-constructed through personal experiences and experiences with others by continuously testing the hypothesis,

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language and literacy development attended and discuss thoughts with colleagues.			encouraging thoughtful reflection of events" (Martínez,2018) Community members are the primary beneficiaries of the research (MacDonald 2012).
<u>Workshop week 3</u>. Reflective practice activity: 3 • Collaborative evaluation of the whole process based on participants' remarks and discussions. • Evaluating current professional literacy development program, and reflecting on it	√	√	"Knowledge is socially reconstructed and co-constructed through personal experiences and experiences with others by continuously testing the hypothesis, encouraging thoughtful reflection of events Process" (Martinez, 2018).
<u>Workshop week 4</u> Reflective practice activity 4: • Collaborative analysis of the whole experience and determining solutions to the problem by referring to relevant literature and other research studies to inform participants' experience		√	Knowledge is socially reconstructed and co-constructed through personal experiences and experiences with others by continuously testing the hypothesis, encouraging thoughtful reflection of events" (Martínez, 2018).
Workshop week 5 • Reflective practice activity 5, The researcher would write the reflective practice process conclusion by summarising what needed to be improved regarding literacy instructional practices and how to do that.		√	Knowledge is socially reconstructed and co-constructed through personal experiences and experiences with others by continuously testing the hypothesis, encouraging thoughtful reflection of events" (Martínez, 2018).
Workshop week 6. Reflective practice activity: 6 • Writing recommendations. • Deciding on appropriate literacy instruction strategies • Developing an action plan for significant professional development for English language literacy teachers. Interpretation and data analysis.	√	√	Community members are the primary beneficiaries of the research (MacDonald 2012). Researcher's role in the project as a mediator or interpreter.

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- The researcher will write the final report and dissemination.

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CHAPTER5: FINDING AND ANALYSIS

5.0. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the presentation of the findings of the study. Data analysis was done in two parts. Firstly, inductive analysis of the individual interviews and focus group was undertaken guided by the different teacher professional development models that shaped the researcher's conceptual framework (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Secondly, the findings from the analysis of the professional development plan document were explored. The researcher adopted a reflective practice inquiry approach in a six-week workshop to analyse the development plan document. Participants were asked to use reflective journals to write their thoughts, feelings and their evaluation of the two models of the professional development experiences.

5.1 Part One. Interview Findings

5.1.1. Individual interviews

This section's qualitative data was intended to investigate and explore the impact of the current literacy professional development programme offered to the English language and literacy teachers in the research site. The main themes generated from the qualitative data (interviews – focus group) were refined and classified in table 2 below. Each key finding was organised under a central theme with verbatim participants' quotes assigned to participants' nicknames (Ali – Ahmad – Fahad etc.). The concepts and critical perceptions that emerged from all sources of data collection methods (Individual interview- focus group and document analysis workshop) were integrated and discussed in Chapter 5.

The findings of the first part (individual interviews and focus group) were grouped according to five main themes entries, they are:

Theme 1: Irrelevance of professional development (PD) provided to teachers

Theme 2: Desire for a shared vision

Theme 3: Students competencies and how they impact their learning

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Theme 4: Curriculum challenges and student learning

Theme 5: Student behaviour and administrative challenges.

Table 3: an overview of the main themes alongside the corresponding quotes from participants

Quotes from participants	Categories	Themes
"We do not receive the right professional development that addresses the problems we face in the classroom. we need to see practical solutions to the problems we face inside the classroom, especially with low achieving students" (7Fahad) "…none of the courses we take deals with these problems in particular…… maybe they kick them by the margin, but not focusing on such issues as obstacles…. . It is not practical at all (10Taha). "…. added but not so much. First, it teaches me how to write, organise lesson plans and form the entry-level objectives, but it did not tell me how to deal with low achievers. We need professional development that enables us to solve these problems"(8Omar)	Current PD does not meet or address participant needs	Irrelevance of PD
", we need to learn from experts" (5Rafat) "...sure, I am looking forward to this moment if they could ask me to contribute. "It is like two hands, one cannot clap. I will be happy to take part in designing development programmes. I know what I need, not them who should decide for me" (7Fahad)"I think it is a good idea to participate in designing the professional development programme because we know what we miss and what we want to learn" (3Osama).	Desire to participate in designing their learning Shared Vision	The desire for a shared vision
Some students are great, others are low achieving but on the other side, some students cannot differentiate between the letter (B) and the letter (D). In grade 7, they cannot write the letter b or d. of course, those low achievers' students cannot write one sentence correctly" (2Samy). We do not know how to deal with these problems".	Students 'competencies and performance and	Students competencies
"The level of the curriculum is very high. Most students found it difficult to learn it. The ministry of education should assign text books that are related to the real-life situations. They need to make life easy for students and teachers as well" "We have one passage about the founder of Qatar Sheikh Jassem bin Mohamed…. If we have more passages like these, this will make it so easy for us and the students	High level curriculum	Curriculum challenges
". This student always speaks during the lesson. He monopolies talking the moment the lesson begins which causes me valuable time to lose" (10Mohy) "…how could the administration want us to raise students' academics and they know that the students are not prepared for the preparatory school, we do not have a magic stick". "…. they only blame us without supporting us … sometimes we feel that as if the world is fighting" (7Fahad)	Disruptive learners. Lack of administrative support	Student behaviour and administrative challenges

5.1.1.1 Theme 1: Irrelevant professional development

Participants' responses about the current English language and literacy professional development varied. Most of the answers indicated to the irrelevance of the professional

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development the participants received. It was clear that the participants were not satisfied with the development programme they received. They viewed it irrelevant to them. Most of them did not see the practical side of this professional development. They thought that the currently mandated programme did not address the real problem they faced in the classroom. In response to whether the current English language and professional literacy development added to their professional knowledge, some participants responded that the current professional development programmes had brought some changes in their understanding at the personal level.

Nevertheless, many of them mentioned that the recent professional development had no effect on their teaching except for the policies and the general guidelines that the SEC wanted them to know such as the curriculum standards and the national professional standards for teachers and school leaders. This claim is read from the words of 7Fahad, one of the participants who participated in the study. He commented: “the benefit of the current development programme was little. …. we did not receive the right professional development that addresses the problems we face in the classroom".

Other participants have also confirmed the irrelevance of the current development programme. 13Hafez commented that “It is fair enough to say that the current PD added to us, but not so much. The programme teaches us, at the entry-level, how to write, and to organise lesson plans, how to form the objectives, but it did not teach us how to deal with low achievers.”

By examining these comments from participants, it was inevitable that the current English language and literacy development programmes failed to make real changes in participants' instructional practices inside the classroom. It was also clear that the existing culture of teacher development based on mandated professional development harmed teachers’ identities and confidence and consequently led to negative performance in the classroom. Lave & Wenger stated

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that teachers' identities might negatively affect when they feel that their professional learning is irrelevant or worthless. Lave and Wenger (1991) assert that teachers could change their practices when the PD provided to them has a connection between their knowledge and what is important to them as practitioners. They will develop a sense of purpose and become clear about their role and feel optimistic about job performance. Hence, they become confident to handle the tasks required of them. Most participants asserted that the current English language and literacy professional development programme did not focus on English as a second language. They claimed that the professional development offered to them was about reading and writing skills, lesson planning and classroom management. 10Mohy conveyed his concern about the mandated professional development he attended by emphasising that: "…none of the courses we take deals with the real problems in our classrooms. They did not focus on these problems as obstacles…. They simply ignore us". Therefore, they insisted on participating in planning their professional learning.

5.1.1.2. Theme 2. A desire for a shared vision

The qualitative data from the individual interview and focus group revealed the participants' attitudes towards contribution and their willingness to share in selecting and planning their professional development showed a shared vision. The majority of the participants expressed their desire to plan their professional development as they are part of the educational system. They had a personal vision and commitment to make a difference in improving English language and literacy education in their school if they were given a chance to participate in designing professional development. This view was expressed openly by many participants. 1Nadir stated that "…sure, I am looking forward to this moment. If they ask me to contribute, I will tell them exactly what I need to know". This standpoint was also supported by 3Osama, who commented: "I think it is a good idea to participate in designing the professional development programmes

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because we know what we miss and what want to learn". These statements revealed the participants' desire to decide on their learning because they know what they wanted to learn and understand. The researcher believes that the participants' ability to identify their needs for training, forms the basis for more professional learning to them and their colleagues in school. This standpoint posits that when teachers have a shared vision become more capable of identifying their needs. They can decide on what they want to know and why they want it. Consequently, they collaborate, interact and reflect on their practices together in their context to solve what challenges them in the classroom (Lave &Wenger, 1991).

5.1.1.3. Theme 3 Students' competencies

The individual interviews and focus group's findings showed participants' awareness of students' competencies and abilities in learning the English language and developing literacy skills. Though participants' perception of their students' abilities differed. Few participants emphasised that some students in their classes were brilliant and had extraordinary abilities to learn English as second language learners. However, most participants claimed that most of their students had limited English language literacy skills. 2Samy stated that:

> "…some of the students are great, they are above expectations (some students are great. However, most of the students in grade 7 are low achieving students; they cannot differentiate between the letters (B) and the letter (D). Those students cannot write the letters b or d, of course, they can't write one sentence correctly".

Moreover, student's inability was referred to by 11Awad during the individual interview sessions. He commented on this aspect by stating that:

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> ".. I am a prep teacher; I do not have to teach my students A BC, I don't have to teach them how to write an apple…. etc. Sometimes I do not even know how to do this. Primary school teachers should do this work".

Thus, most participants highlighted that students do not possess the necessary knowledge and skills in English and literacy. The researcher thinks these claims formed a very negative idea about teachers' identity (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Participants thought students' lack of the necessary skills of the English language and literacy put real obstacles in their way to make a difference in student learning. They felt that many students had not attained the level of proficiency required for studying in middle school. These claims indicated that students did not possess the necessary English language skills that would enable them to understand the curriculum they learn. The researcher thinks that handling these challenges requires participants to collaboratively work inside the school with colleagues who have experience in the field to help them find solutions to these problems. When teachers contextualised their learning, there is the possibility of acquiring and creating conditions that can solve field problems and improve professional practices (Lave & Wenger, 1991)

5.1.1.4. Theme 4. Curriculum challenges

The study also revealed a mismatch between the curriculum required to be taught in middle school and the actual teachers' instructional practices in classrooms and students' abilities. They indicated that the implemented curriculum was a challenge for students' age. Participants believed that the curriculum was not suitable for second language learners. They reported that the curriculum was designed to deal with students who do not have reading and writing problems. Some of the participants stated that:

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"…the problem here is that the syllabus is not designed to deal with students who have problems in these skills. They expected that students have already overcome these problems. There is some problem actually with the curriculum itself." (4Ali)

"…on the other hand, teachers themselves might not be qualified enough or even aware of how to deal with such problems. The reality was that teachers employed extensive use of worksheets instead of the textbooks." (12Saber)

"..One of the most important things that the SEC should make is to produce a book related to students' real-life. That will make it easy for them to understand the content. We have one passage about the founder of Qatar Sheikh Jassem bin Mohamed only. If we have more passages like these, it will be easier for the student to interact with the content". (5Rafat)

Participants thought that the current curriculum did not address students' culture and needs. They stated that they used worksheets to simplify the curriculum's difficulty and reteach the necessary skills that students lacked. The researcher thinks that these claims imply that participants need effective professional development to acquire the appropriate instructional strategies to deal with the high-level curriculum presented to students of limited English language knowledge and skills.

5.1.1.5. Theme 5. Student behaviour and Administrative challenges

Data analysis of the individual interview and the focus group revealed that participants suffered much from the disruptive classroom environment and student misbehaviour. Participants strongly highlighted these behavioural challenges and negatively associated them with their teaching practices and student's underperformance in the English language. Though some participants expressed their good relationship with students during teaching time and outside the

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classroom, many participants considered student disruptive behaviour a real challenge that impedes teachers work in the school. However, some participants attributed students' underperformance in English language and literacy learning to misbehaviour inside the school. These participants emphasised that their students misbehaved badly during classes, even in the presence of visitors. They stated that sometimes even non-disruptive students found themselves engage in disruptive behaviour due to peer pressure. Such misbehaviour impacted teaching negatively. 10Mohy commented that "... this student always speaks during the lesson. He monopolises talking the moment the lesson begins, which causes me valuable time to lose."

Participants were not satisfied with the support they obtained from school administration. Some of them claimed that the school's administration was not supportive at all. They asserted that the measures taken by the administration were not enough to maintain discipline inside the classroom. Most of the participants confirmed that they put much effort trying to gain support from the administration, but they felt that their appeals did not count. They did not think that the administration understood the problems they faced inside the classroom. They believed that the school administration always blamed them for students' under-performance in English language and literacy learning without looking for the real reasons that caused it. Participants also claimed that they were obliged to the administration final decisions. The following statement articulated this notion:

> "…how could the administration want us to raise students' academics and they know that the students are not prepared for the preparatory school, we do not have a magic stick". "…. they only blame us without supporting us … sometimes we feel that as if the world is fighting against us." (9Taha)

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Participants believed that misbehaviour was another reason for students' underperformance in English language and literacy learning. In their view, without dedicated support and a real understanding of the whole situation, it becomes difficult for them even to continue as teachers in schools. They thought that there should be other practical approaches to address student misbehaviour.

5.2. Part Two: Findings of the professional document analysis (Reflective practice workshop)

This section (collaborative, reflective workshop) was devoted to the professional development document analysis. The journals entries' conclusions are supported by quotes from the journal entries that describe the participants' perspectives. These quotes enable the readers to examine the research's validity because they provide a "detailed description." The results were grouped according to three main themes. They were organised as follows:

Theme 6: The validity of the PD programme

Theme 7: Identification of training needs

Theme 8: Collegiality and collaboration with peers

Table 4, below, displays the main themes from reflective practice workshop (Analysis of PD plan) with entries and some quotes from participants' reflective journals. Table 4: an overview of the main themes from participants' reflective journals. (Workshop).

Entries from participants' reflective journals	Quotes from participants' journal	Main theme
• The mandated professional development content knowledge, intended audience, time length, intensity, and delivery approaches were not practical. Compared with the activities in professional learning communities.	"90 minutes workshop during the year for each English language skill was not quite enough to enhance our learning" (1Nadir) "There is a difference between the professional development we go to and the professional learning communities. In professional learning communities, time is open for us to discuss anything we want, we can do that many times we want?"(9 Taha)	The validity of the PD programme of Reflection on practice

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	"Those who taught us were not teachers. They were professors in the university. They use general topics" (15Emad;10 Mohy)	
• Participants believed that the current programme development was more theoretical. There was a repetition of topics. • The current programme focused on general topics only without concentrating on what they need for teaching their students. • They wanted to learn specific strategies that are responsive to their classrooms problems, including modern technology.	"We learn the same topics every year. There was nothing new." "We need comprehensive and practical professional programmes that address our needs." "Yes, we want to participate in setting the objectives of our development programme because we are aware of our student's needs. We know what they need to learn. We know what we need to learn. I think it is better to take our ideas into account when designing the objectives of such programmes. The patient knows his medicine better than the doctor. We can implement what we believe in."(11Awad)	Identification of training needs (Identity/Reflection on practice)
• Participants preferred and more inclined to work with peers as a group inside the school rather than attending formal development sessions outside the school with groups from other disciplines or different schooling stages. • Participants developed ways of debating, discussing, describing their problems and reflecting on them with colleagues from the same discipline. • They have the opportunity to develop a good line of communication with each other to discuss what they need to learn and what they need to do in the classroom.	"Working with colleagues helps us to share experiences and exchange knowledge" (6Sayed) "We are motivated to learn when we work with our colleagues inside the school" (13Hafez). 'I feel confident when I work with my colleagues inside the school. I can ask any questions freely, and they answer me clearly: (15Emad)	Collegiality Interaction and Collaboration (Domain)

The researcher held six workshop sessions over six weeks to analysis the PD document. The method used in these workshops was a collaborative, reflective practice workshop. That used reflective journals to write their thoughts and ideas about the PD plan. The data obtained from these the reflective journal entries provided the researcher with a better understanding and insights about participants' perceptions and experiences regarding their professional development and professional learning. Before presenting the themes from this workshop, an overview of the

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participants' background with reflective practice will add more insights to the themes that emerged.

5.2.1 Participants' experience with reflection process

The use of reflective journals in a research study provides an opportunity for researchers to hear the voice of participants' through a different channel to express their thoughts and feelings as a part of their learning experience (Dunlap, 2006). Reflective journals are one means for collecting research data in qualitative research. They provide significant insights, not available through other ways of data collection (Phelps, 2005).

In the workshop sessions, participants were asked to reflect on two types of professional development: the current mandatory development and the professional learning based on the literature resources provided to them. Participants responded to ten questions to write their perceptions regarding the two types of professional development they experienced. The following questions prompted them:

- What do you think of reflective practice as a learning tool for you?
- What were the essential strengths of the two types of professional development?
- What, if anything, would you change about the professional development programme?
- Do you think mandatory professional development or school-based development was successful? Why?
- What prompted you to attend either of these developments?
- What new skills, information or understanding have you taken away from these two types of professional development?
- What did you learn about yourself as a teacher through these professional development experiences?

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- What prompted you to attend either of these developments?
- What new skills, information or understanding have you taken away from these two types of professional development?
- What did you learn about yourself as a teacher through these professional development experiences?

However, conducting reflective practice as a new paradigm in this study appeared difficult for participants as they experienced it for the first time. It is evident from the notes extracted participants' reflective journals that they experienced initial difficulties with their integration into the thoughtful practice process. An unmistakable feeling of uncertainty was shown up. Though participants believed that reflection process would be more beneficial if they continued practising it, they were confused and unsure if they could do it professionally. Their initial endeavour began with an unclear situation, characterized by a lack of confidence, and fear. They were hesitant to participate in the reflective process because they were unsure of their ability to do it. The following statement explains this hesitation and uncertainty. For example, 12Saber wrote in his reflective journal about the tension among the participants at the beginning of the process: "At the beginning of the reflective practice, it was not simple to do the task. We faced difficulties: we were not sure about the process. It was hard sharing and discussing ideas with other teachers. We did not know where to start and how to do it…"

This situation is expected from people whose reflective practice experience is short. Tran (2016) referred to this dilemma by asserting that lack of refection culture in the organisation environment, and lack of skill to demonstrate reflective practice prevented individuals from participating in the process. Hence, motivating participants and supporting them to try reflection practice remains a question around the period at which participants positively and productively

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take part regularly enough to encourage them to engage with this practice does not go astray. Despite these negative feelings and anxiety by getting involved in the reflective process, participants became confident to practice it. They discovered its benefits as expressed by 13Hafez: "I did not think reflective practice is as useful as this, really it is important for our learning. It made me discover things that I did not know before about myself."

Participants' willingness to learn the reflective practice process was evident from the notes taken from their reflective journals. They indicated that the implementation of reflective practice in this workshop had changed their beliefs about it. Importantly, they valued the new knowledge they learned due to their participation in the collaborative conversation and dialogue face to face with peers. These insights were taken from the participants' entries. They thought that there were many benefits to reflective practice. The advantage for them as teachers was growing in confidence. They began to think about their instructional practices from different perspectives. They indicated that being able to read a document, think of it from different angles enabled them to identify the areas of strengths and weakness of their professional development and to decide what they need to learn.

> "It is imperative to work with experienced colleagues of the same discipline and have guidance from them to transfer the knowledge we learn and put it into practice to achieve the students."(2Samy)
>
> "Analysing and reflecting in the PD programme we used to attend helped us to evaluate it and see the advantages and disadvantages of our point of view as teachers. It is a confusing process, but I think we can learn it."(9Taha)

The reporting of the findings in part is supported by quotes from the journal entries that describe the participants' perspective and views on the two types of professional development they

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experienced. The researcher used journal entries with quotes from the participants to enable the readers to examine the research's validity.

Upon completing the professional development document's reflective practice process compared with data about professional learning communities as situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), participants displayed their reflective journals for discussions. Then, reflective journals were analysed for emerging themes. Key themes were evident across the data in the reflective journals and are classified by specific entries. The researcher used notes to register all words, phrases, and statements mentioned multiple times during collaborative discussions sessions and ranked them as one entry for each frequency group. The patterns coded while analysing the reflective journals. The researcher's notes revealed three distinct themes.

5.2.2. Theme 6: The validity of the PD programme

The mandated professional development content knowledge, intended audience, time length and intensity, and delivery approaches were highlighted as weaknesses of the current PD programme, compared with the activities in professional learning communities.

5.2.2.1 Content knowledge and delivery approaches

The current professional development content knowledge and the delivery modes and strategies were heavily highlighted in participants' reflective journals entries and discussions. Participants' views on the topics of the formal mandatory development they attended were negative. They argued that the topics of the mandated PD were repeated and generic. Thus they did not make a change in their instructional practices. These claims can be read in the following entries:

> "We used to study the same topics for ages. Every time we attend professional development programme. We study the same general issues."(9Taha).

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These reflective journal entries indicated that participants' professional development did not add much to them as they were delivered outside the school. Consequently, they did not address their actual needs. Whereas, when individuals interacted in a community of practice with peers of the same domain and discipline inside the school, the knowledge gained from such interaction will result in practical classroom applications.

Moreover, participants remarked that workshop and lecture modes as only approaches to delivering English language and literacy professional development were not useful. They believed that the nature of professional learning communities would enable them to work as teams of novice and experienced teachers. This notion was seen in the participants' words that they had a chance to share ideas and exchange experience to improve their instructional practice and create a learning atmosphere where all students can reach their potential. For example, one of the participants wrote in his reflective journal entry:

> "We sit passively and listen to the lecturer, teaching us about general concepts that are not related to our real problems. We need to see practically, for example, how to deal with low achieving students rather than giving us just theories we do not know how to apply in the classroom."(12Saber).

Participants 'journal entries also revealed that they favoured professional learning communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Fullan; 2006; Freeman, Reynolds, Toledo & Abu-Tineh, 2016). They viewed professional learning communities more effective than mandatory professional development for many reasons. Firstly, professional learning communities focused on collaborative work that leads to problem-solving. Secondly, engaging in a cycle of cooperative learning, where trust and commitment were present, helped them to become confident and offered

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them a chance to analyse data, set goals and learn collaboratively to that end. Participants also indicated that professional learning communities would offer them opportunities to apply learning through demonstrations or modelling and practice rather than presentations and mandatory development lectures. Thus, they considered the nature of professional learning communities would be specific, collaborative and practical. These claims were observed in reflective journal entries as follows:

> "This is the learning we look for; we want to discuss our problems among us, to exchange ideas with colleagues who have much more experience than us to understand what we need to learn. Suppose I compare our session now with the development sessions we used to attend. In that case, I can say this session is more useful to me than the professional development imposed on us by the SEC, simply because now we can discuss our problems and exchange ideas about how to solve these problems."(15Emad)

5.2.2.2. Intended audience

There was an agreement among participants that the current mandatory professional development programme was not personalised for middle school teachers. It was designed for all English language teachers of all grades from grade 1 to grade 12. Accordingly, they believed that such a design did not provide explicit development appropriate for addressing their students' needs. The following reflective journal entry explained this claim:

> "Why all of us, teachers from different grades study the same thing?" What works best for some teachers will not necessarily work for others" (3Osama).

"We gathered with teachers whose problems are different from ours. Therefore we could find answers to our problems when learning together." (8Omar)

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The writers here suggested that working among colleagues of the same domain and discipline (of the same grades) as a group of practitioners who have their specific needs is more useful than working with other groups with different challenges and problems inside the classroom. These assumptions fit well with Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of domain in situated learning. In communities of practice, individuals think of their concerns and specific challenges better than sharing them with others who have different problems. Therefore, participants suggested that personalising professional development programmes for teachers of different stages and tailoring them based on their needs would be meaningful.

5.2.2.3. Time length and intensity

The PD time allotment was reported a negative feature of the mandatory professional development programme as indicated by the participants. Limited time allotment was referred to as evidence of their incompetence and confidence. They pointed out that the time allotment of the required professional development programme was insufficient to comprehend the suggested topics and make the desired change happen. The insignificance of mandatory development may have resulted due to the irrelevant design that did not address the participants' needs as can be seen in the following entries:

> ‘‘90 minutes workshop during the year for each English language skill was not quite enough to enhance our learning" (1Nadir)
>
> "There is a difference between the professional development we go to and the professional learning communities. In professional learning communities, time is open for us to discuss anything we want, we can do that many times we want?" (9 Taha)

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The writers here indicated that the time allocated for their training was not enough for them as an English Language and literacy skills teachers. They claimed that they needed to learn different teaching skills to help them improve their instructional practice. They drew a comparison between the Current PD and the community of practice in which they involved. It was evident that the length and intensity of time in professional development communities are merit and advantage to participants as understood from the entries mentioned above.

5.2.3. Theme 7: The identification of needs

Through the reflective process, participants were able to identify the weaknesses of the current PD. This process enabled them to define their needs. They shared similar perspectives about the two models of professional development. The discussions concluded that the current English language and professional literacy development should be rethought and improved to meet their needs. However, participants agreed that the mandatory professional development had a considerable impact on their practices in general. It was essential for addressing general issues such as the English language and literacy standards and the Supreme Education Council's public policies, but, they essentially agreed on what useful English language and professional literacy development look should be. They recognised that the topics they learned in mandatory professional development were often too broad and disconnected from application in their classrooms. They also indicated that, as individual teachers, having little or no participation in the decision-making process of what should be learned, leaving them disconnected from the learning experience. This standpoint could be noticed from the following reflective journal entry:

> "Yes, we want to participate in setting the objectives of our development programme because we are aware of our student's needs. We know what they need to learn. We know what we need to learn. I think it is better to

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> take our ideas into account when designing the objectives of such programmes. The patient knows his medicine better than the doctor. We can implement what we believe in."(11Awad).

5.2.4. Theme 8: Collegiality and collaboration with peers

Participants were more inclined to work with peers as a group inside the school than attending formal development sessions outside the school with groups from other disciplines or different schooling stages. They developed ways of debating, discussing, describing their problems and reflecting on them with colleagues from the same domain. They had the opportunity to establish a good communication line to discuss what they need to learn and what they need to do in the classroom. The following journal entries reflected the participants' perception of working collaboratively with their colleagues inside the school. They believed that it was better for them than attending mandatory professional development outside school.

> "We are motivated to learn when we worked with our colleagues inside the school. Working with colleagues helped us to share experiences and exchange knowledge. Working with my peers in this great group at the time we wanted helping us to discuss our classroom and students' problems deeply." (6Sayed).

'I feel confident when I work with my colleagues inside the school. I can ask any questions freely, and they answer me. It is an excellent idea to work with your friends and share ideas with them. We learn a lot from this assembly."(4Ali).

Participants assumed that these professional learning communities' flexible nature would allow them to focus on students' learning and outcomes. These assumptions reinforced situated learning's effectiveness as an approach to meaningful learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Bandura (1977) stated that when people get engaged in a social learning setting, they learn from one another

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throughout observation, imitation and modelling. Such an interaction allows behavioural and environmental influences on their learning.

5.2.5. Action plan for significant professional development for English language and literacy instruction.

Based on the data analysis of the professional development programmes, outcomes of the interviews, and the reviewed literature sources, participants were able to identify their area of focus. They agreed upon specific features and characteristics to guide their professional learning and be the basis for a useful English language and professional literacy development. Therefore, they have selected the features of significant professional development suggested by (Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017) as fundamental elements for English language and professional literacy development they are aspiring to. They have selected a plan which focused on what they needed to learn. The key features of the development plan components were displayed in the table (7) below. They addressed: content focused, active learning, and collaboration, models of effective practice that incorporate technology and electronics sources, coaching and expert support, feedback and reflection, and sustained duration. Each feature is followed by a rationale for choosing it on the right column of the plan. However, the researcher believed that this plan should not be considered a comprehensive guide to addressing struggling students' instructional needs. Still, it could be employed as a resource for the teachers in the research site who seek evidence-based strategies for addressing the problems they face in the classroom. It is worth recalling that the main elements needed in the process of a significant professional development are: teacher learning and collaboration, teacher community formation, teacher confidence in content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and practices, accountability,

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and sustainability, reflection on practice and technology integration in professional development (Husbands, 2011)

The following table displays the fundamental features participants considered appropriate for English language and literacy teaching professional development.

Table 5: Features of English language and literacy development plan

Core features	**Rationale**
Content-focused	Focusing on teaching strategies associated with specific curriculum content supports teachers' learning within their classroom contexts. (Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017).
Incorporate active learning	Engaging teachers directly in designing and trying out teaching strategies. (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017).
Support collaboration	Creating space for teachers to share ideas and collaborate in their learning (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017).
Use models of effective practice	Modelling of instruction provides teachers with a clear vision of what best practices look like. (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017).
Provide coaching and expert support	Sharing of expertise about content and evidence-based practices. (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017).
Offer feedback and reflection	Receiving input and make changes to their practise by facilitating reflection and soliciting feedback. (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017).
Sustained duration	Providing teachers with adequate time to learn, practice, implement and reflect upon new strategies that facilitate changes in their practice. (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017).

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Technology-Based development	/Varied options of growth / enabling teachers to try new knowledge. / Faster learning / flexibility, accessibility, convenience / improves students learning.

5.3. Summary.

This study's findings revealed several key characteristics as fundamentals to improve English language and literacy instructional practices. One unique element of the professional development programme is the collaborative structure which includes reflective practice as an essential part to help teachers rethink their professional learning for their success (Gibb, 1988; Tran, 2010; Jones, Stall, & Yarbrough, 2013). Participants benefited from the collaborative, reflective inquiry, the rich dialogue and discussions; and sharing opportunities from the situated learning network they had informally created (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Besides, other elements exclusive to teacher learning are programme content knowledge, programme time allotment, programme audience and programme nature, and delivery approaches. Therefore, rethinking and restructuring English language and professional literacy development for participants is necessary to make it meaningful to them.

Moreover, concern about technology integration was raised. Technology incorporating in professional teacher learning is found to be an essential element for improving both teachers and students' learning. Research (Liu, 2012; Incorporating Technology into Curriculum from Teacher', 2016; Writers, "Education Technology Tools for Teachers", 2019) confirmed that improved student learning could be attained by increasing the use of technology in the classroom. Research asserted the impact of digital technology in improving student learning. According to research (Liu, 2012) digital world has opened the door wildly for education and has removed the physical barriers that hinder learning for both teacher and student learning. Incorporating technology in the

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classroom will improve learning outcomes (Liu, 2012; Incorporating Technology into Curriculum from Teacher', 2016; Writers, "Education Technology Tools for Teachers", 2019). In agreement with these assumptions, the researcher thinks that teacher professional development should include a considerable portion of digital technology training as advances in technology have changed the way teachers teach and shaped the way students learn (Liu, 2012) Thus, teachers must master technology tools to help students access the potential of these learning opportunities.

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CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

6.0 Introduction

This study explored the factors that influence teacher professional development to improve English language and literacy learning from teachers' perspectives. This chapter aims to present a discussion of the results in answering the three research questions:

- What are teachers' initial attitudes, beliefs and practices about English language and professional literacy development?
- What are the needs of the English language and literacy teachers in the research site, and how does teacher professional development address these needs?
- What model of professional development is most appropriate to the needs of the English language and literacy teachers?

Reflection on practice was the basis for the findings that resulted in this study. These answers to the research questions resulted from the in-depth reflective practice process during the individual interviews focus group and the PD plan analysis. Thus, certain variables emerged from the data, which allowed for a breakdown of patterns and themes to help define what useful professional development is suitable for this study's English language and literacy teachers. The prompted questions the researcher provided during the interview sessions enabled the participants to give thoughtful answers.

6.1 Reflection and collaborative work experience

The introduction of reflective practice inquiry in this study was a new paradigm to participants, as mentioned before. The research site school does offer some administrative support to assist teachers with their professional work but what the researcher delivered was different. It was a reflective practice experience central to teachers' professional development (Tran, 2016).

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The findings indicated that participants welcomed the opportunity for reflection on their practice. They identified several positive outcomes as a result of the workshop.

Participants valued reflective practice as an instrument that would enable them to think about their professional practice's past and future to produce a useful programme responsive to their needs. This notion is supported by research which asserts reflective practice is an approach that could promote teachers' professional development and improve the quality of teaching and learning (Mathew, Mathew, Prince & Peechattu, 2017). When practitioners engage in reflective practice processes, they usually consider causes of the problems that challenge them and try to find solutions. Thus, reflective practice becomes an essential tool in teachers' professional learning and the most useful technique that teachers can use to improve their instructional practices in the research site context.

Participants emphasised that collaborative work with colleagues, who have successfully raised students' English language and literacy skills, helped them learn more about the practical approaches to use. These viewpoints support the notion that collaboration in professional learning communities (Lave & Wenger,1991) inside schools, where opportunities for reflective practice and inquiry are available, can be an appropriate opportunity for English language and literacy teachers of this study to work together to solve the problems they encounter in the classroom. They can reflect, discuss and solve their professional problems when they interact with each other. Teachers need to observe and be observed by their colleagues in their classrooms and classrooms of other teachers in other schools confronting similar problems (Bundra, 1977; Fullan, 2006). Lave and Wenger (1991) confirm this notion by asserting that teachers' commitment and professionalism lead to better results when negotiating meaning among themselves. They pointed to this essential aspect of professional learning that when teachers who have strong ties to

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colleagues and work together on instructional issues are more likely to negotiate to mean among themselves to resolve classroom problems. They urged knowledge to negotiate meaning among stakeholder rather than a matter of individual transmission of information. Thus, stakeholders can produce gains regardless of their experience or previous student achievement levels. This concept supports and strengthens the value of school-based professional development over formal mandatory professional development imposed on teachers. This notion is evident for the participants in this study. Many of them agreed that what they learned in this study as a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) was far better and more meaningful than mandated PD. In this type of development, they saw a chance to understand their roles as English language teachers better than following the mandated PD development they used to attend. They viewed the collaborative, reflective process they experienced as facilitators to their engagement in regular routines related to their work. Thus, this collaboration practically and socially motives the participants to learn the knowledge and skills needed because they see the tasks they are engaged in as being related to their essential goals. Thus, they formed positive feeling towards the activities they are engaging in, and demonstrate satisfaction of achieving their goals.

6.2. Research Question: 1

6.2.1 Value of current professional development

Data findings in this section are responsive to the research question (1) that seeks to understand teachers' initial attitudes, beliefs and practices about English language and professional literacy development. The findings revealed participants' attitudes and beliefs toward the current professional development as English language and literacy teachers. The results generated from the interviews and the reflective practice process highlighted significant variables regarding areas that were seen as necessary as growth areas for teachers. However, most participants showed

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negative views toward the current professional development. They believed that formal mandated model of development did not add much to them except for general information the headquarters wanted them to learn. Many researchers supported this point of view made by participants. They assert that teachers' failure to take up from formal mandated professional development attributed to this model's nature is presented in a generic manner that is not responsive to their needs (Mizell, 2010; Moir, 2013; Bayar, 2014; Amineh & Davatgari, 2015; Freeman, Reynolds, Toledo & Abu-Tineh, 2016; Darling-Hammond, Hyler &Gardner, 2017; Nazer, 2017; Meissel, Parr, & Timperley, 2016).

6.2.2. The Impact of collaboration on teachers' professional identity

Lave and Wenger (1991) asserted that teachers could create their identity in school-based learning. They defined the school as a space that foster belonging and value for teachers of the same disciplines. This view assumes that professional knowledge is a social process that depends on trust, a process in which teachers' professional identity is an asset to teachers' success. These professional identities incessantly affect teachers' experiences. With identity-based teaching, students become successful learners. Thus, attending professional development in places outside the school may not create this identity as their knowledge is not classroom-related.

In the researcher's view, this question's findings were related to the participants' identity (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Professional identity is defined as the values, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and commitments an individual hold toward being a particular teacher (Fajardo Castaneda, 2014).

The findings of this question answered what teacher know and do (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Participants were able to identify what they know and do by describing the nature of the current PD they joined. Here the concept and the significance identity appears very clearly in participants

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learning. Participants affirmed that the information and skills they learned in formal mandatory PD are entirely disconnected from the real context they should implement. Therefore, they could not improve the underperformance of the students in the English language. Participants highlighted how their participation and collaboration with peers in professional learning communities resulted in improved knowledge and professional practice. This claim is an essential domain in the construction of teachers' identities. The data suggested that participants had developed a sense of belongingness and social awareness, which facilitated their understanding of professional learning. Thus, developing teacher' professional identity is a long process. It depends on the quality of the professional development they received (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Lave and Wenger refer to the nature of professional learning that develops teachers' professional identity. They state that teachers' professional identity developed when they work to solve real-life problems in a meaningful social setting where their professional learning activities are clearly articulated and closely aligned with their learning needs. They should engage in these learning activities with the critical guidance of critical other colleagues.

Researchers affirm that teachers 'attitudes and perceptions should not be ignored by development providers when designing professional development programmes for English language teachers. They confirm that these attitudes and perceptions are essential for effective teaching and professional identity (OECD, 2009; Cristina-Corina, & Valerica 2012; Fajardo Castaneda, 2014). This claim implies that teachers' concerns about English language and literacy teaching can significantly affect their professional identity and self-efficacy and might lead to either good or bad instruction based on the development they undergo.

Teachers' anxieties and attitudes toward current mandatory English language and literacy development programme greatly affected their professional identity and their perception of their

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competence in teaching English language and literacy skills (Husbands, 2011; Fajardo Castaneda, 2013). Lack of awareness and negative perception about one's competency may lead to frustration due to lack of in-depth understanding of the knowledge needed to do one‘s work. The paucity of knowledge may impact teacher’ self-efficacy and demotivate them from tracking their professional learning (Gavora, 2010). Therefore, improving teachers’ skills requires sustained professional development. It should allow a chance for teachers to think critically about their classrooms (VerLinden, 2001; Toscano, 2012), besides, influential school leaders to foster the culture for professional learning by building a supportive environment.

Steyn (2013b) indicatedthat one factor that impacts the teacher's professional development lies in school leadership. Wegner (2017) contends that the leadership's role is to create a positive professional learning environment for effective professional practices. They should make an attractive professional development environment that values teachers’ voice and addresses their needs. Thus, change in teachers’ professional learning is connected to both teachers' inner processes such as perception, which lead to behavioural changes and outside factors (Steyn, 2013b) that affect their growth and development (Steyn, 2013b ; Wegner, 2017) as school environment and policymaking.

Lack of support from school leadership impacted teachers' efficacy much at the research site as a participant stated. Literature indicates that that school's administration has a critical role in motivating teachers to do their jobs effectively by building a vibrant professional learning community (The Department of Education & Training in Melbourne, 2005). Both teachers and administrators have areas of shared perceptions (Bridich, 2016). However, when teachers feel support from school leadership, their ownership and commitment toward enhancing teaching and learning will increase. Consequently, school leadership can maximise advantage by fostering

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collaboration in their schools to support and to encourage teachers to excel (Uribe-AlFlorez, Al - Rwashedeh & Morales, 2015).

Schools leadership, particularly instructional leaders, has been reported to play a vital role in creating a positive environment for teachers' professional learning. Effective schools are "...distinguished by professional leadership motivated by the desire to build a vibrant professional learning community" (The Department of Education & Training in Melbourne, 2005. p.7). Their shared vision and goals should enable them to identify their roles to foster quality teaching and learning (Day& Sammons, 2013). Mourão (2018) claims that school leadership's impact is on organisations' performance, the processes of change, approaching the commitment, and the well-being of the workforce as being undeniable. Therefore, school leaders and professional development policymakers who seek to raise English language and literacy standards must give some thought to maximising the expertise of their teachers in teaching English language and literacy skills. They should create a significant professional development climate for teachers to learn. Such professional development should be comprehensive and responsive to both teachers and student's needs. Developing participants' identity requires providing them with appropriate learning opportunities. They wanted professional development that focuses on the main domains of professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement that address their immediate and personal needs and students' needs (Giraldo, 2014). Thus, situated learning or school-based learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) is the appropriate professional learning model to meet the participants' needs. Participants need to identify possibilities beyond the theoretical knowledge they received in mandated PD. They wanted professional learning development that enthusiastically involves them as part of their professional identity.

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6.2.3. Learning Autonomy

The findings indicated that teachers call for participation in designing their professional learning was highly emphasised because they knew what they wanted to learn. Their own needs drove them to know what they want to learn. This notion is supported by the andragogy theory of learning that teachers, as adult learners, are always guided by their experience (Knowles, 1980). They have enough experience to rely on rather than being taught to do specific assignments by others. This experience also helps them link new and prior learning to test new ideas' validity and how they fit. This claim implies that as adult self-directed learners, teachers tend to discover meanings by themselves in their personal and professional lives (Henschke, 2007).

Given that teachers are result-oriented, they tend to shift directly from theory to application (Avalos, 2011). They check what they already know and discuss linking up new ideas to prior knowledge when they work collaboratively in their context (Lave &Wenger, 1991). Thus, teachers' reflection in their situated learning experience could be related to their teacher learning autonomy (Lave &Wenger, 1991). This learning autonomy emphasises the impact it could make on situated learning and its importance in designing significant professional development for English language and literacy learning and teaching.

In the context of this study, learners differ a lot in their backgrounds, prior knowledge, motivation and skills. Addressing each student's potential requires accepting these differences in the classrooms by teachers in the first place, then planning instruction or showing a willingness to differentiate instruction to meet students' needs (Tomlinson, 2003). The researcher contends that a desire to change students' learning relates to teachers' self-efficacy (Gavora, 2010). Lack of planning and ability to differentiate demotivated teachers to deal with the diverse students in their

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classroom (Bandura, 1977; Tomlinson, 2003; Gavora, 2010). Teacher's self-efficacy is considered an essential factor for the teacher's performance in the classroom.

As depicted by Knowles in his andragogy theory of learning, the idea of self-concept is that an adult learner is an autonomous learner. He becomes more self-directed and independent as he matures; thus, he typically wants to choose what to learn, when to understand it and how he wants to know (Knowles, 1980). This viewpoint posits that teachers should take a real part in designing their professional learning instead of imposing only formal mandated development. However, the change is unlikely to occur if there is a gap between beliefs and suggested practices.

6.3 Research Question 2

6.3.1. The impact of the reflective process on identifying learning needs.

This part discusses research question 2: "What are the needs of English language and literacy teachers in the research site, and how does teacher professional development address these needs?"

Participants of this study need to know why students fail in English language classes and how to solve these problems. Teachers need to understand what prevents them from meeting students' educational needs. The researcher assumes that one barrier is that professional development providers often do not identify the link between teachers' abilities and professional development. Therefore, without addressing teachers' needs, teachers cannot successfully teach students.

Findings from the participants' reflective practice workshop (reflective journals entries) informed us about the professional development components that they wanted to attend. This outline determined what professional development should be and how it should respond to the prompt questions that asked about which model of development is responsive to their needs.

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Participants' reflective journals entries revealed that working in collaborative groups in which they reflect on their practices and discuss their classroom problems is much more meaningful than any other professional development type. The researcher thinks that this is an essential foundation for participants' learning. Lave and Wenger (1991) asserted that situated learning provides a factual background that reflects how the knowledge will be used in real-life. In this context reflection, social interaction and collaboration are essential components of situated learning. Thus, situated learning implies that refection is a crucial factor in teachers' learning as it enables them to develop and transform concepts into abstract. (Lave & Wenger (1991). Accordingly, they could reflect upon knowledge to recognise their needs to solve problems in the field. The reflective process enabled them to do this job. They stated their need for specialised and personalised professional development programmes as middle school teachers with specific concerns. This need differs from the requirements of English language and literacy teachers in primary or secondary schools. Consequently, mandatory professional development provided to all teachers of different schooling stages does not address these concerns.

Participants' perception of their self-efficacy was deficient. Findings of the interviews indicated that self-efficacy is an interesting concern that needs to be addressed in developing teachers. Participants' personal belief in the ability to plan instruction and effectively accomplish instructional objectives was clearly articulated. Most of the participants expressed an inability to teach and to affect low achieving student's learning positively. Phrases and quotes from them reflected this incapability: "we do not have a magic stick" "what shall we do with them". Such utterances demonstrate participants' sense of low self-efficacy which may prevent them from making the desired change in student learning. Findings emerged from the qualitative data analysis indicated some of these utterances. As shown in Theme 3, teachers perceived their students as low

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achieving and a hopeless case. Expressing inability to deal with these students, was an indicator of low teacher self-efficacy. Some participants declared that they did not even know how to deal with students who lack basic skills of English language knowledge. The low expectation for students' performance and abilities, causes lack of motivation in teachers and distort their instructional practices because teachers' expectations for students lead them to deliver instruction in line with these expectations (Tomlinson, 2003).

Moreover, one of the participants expressed his opinion on the current professional development programmes by asserting that "these professional development programmes are not like Qatar TESOL…. that is why I decided to take CELT". This reference also indicated a teacher's desire to learn about specific English language and literacy teaching strategies that were not present in the current mandatory professional development. Thus, he wants to pursue another learning to improve his instructional practices than being given compulsory professional development.

Lave and Wenger (1991) stressed the identity and shared interest and repertoire in their situated learning theory. That communities of practice cultivate on things that matter to people' life. They should focus on things that of significant interest to the members, unlike mandated development that focuses on general topics that might not interest all stakeholders. Therefore, based on these observations, the researcher thinks that participants had revealed the limits of the impact of mandatory professional development programmes on their instructional practices and self-efficacy for many reasons. Firstly, the workshops that took place at one time and in one location without continuous support rarely resulted in effective teaching and learning (Lave &Wenger, 1991; Fullan, 2006). This notion is supported by Wolf reflecting on her experience as a teacher in the US with the professional development programmes she had attended, she described her attitudes towards these development programmes by commenting:

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> "I had opportunities to attend well developed and thoughtful workshops on how to transform teaching and learning. Sadly, the enthusiasm engendered by the workshops waned when I returned to the classroom and the reality of the thousands of other things that had to be done. It was hard as a young teacher to generalise from what I learned at the workshop. Because I had no follow-up from the courses or on-going support from colleagues or mentors, I would look back months later only to realise that I had been unable to implement anything I learned." (Wolf, 2011, P. 1).

Wolf's point of view suggested that formal or mandated workshop professional development cannot address all teachers' classroom needs. It implies that teachers need tailored professional development that is responsive to their needs and students' needs. Secondly, when the approaches used to deliver the professional development hover on a 'one fit for all' principle for upgrading teachers' knowledge base that is independent of context, they will not help enhance teachers' capacities appropriately. Thirdly, according to Avalos (2011) without motivating teachers to participate, collaborate and experiment with new strategies, they may be unwilling to adopt the information they learned from such development Thus, their self-efficacy will degrade.

Additionally, the development programme time allotment was not enough, as shown in Theme 3 of the reflective practice workshop findings. Adopting 90-minute workshops as the English language, and literacy development programme approach may not expand their knowledge as preparatory school teachers. Underwood (2018) stated that 90-minute block for English language and literacy learning is only suitable for teachers and students in grades K-3. Neither teachers in preparatory schools nor teachers in secondary schools use the 90-minute block schedule in Qatar. This notion suggests that mandatory professional development for all teachers of different grade levels may not address their unique needs unless they cater to their specific needs and

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contexts. Thus, Lave and Wenger (1991) urged that professional development programmes, delivered through workshops are not authentic professional learning because they do not depend on one learning mind-set. To say, they do not depend on teachers' abilities and what they want to do. Mandatory professional development providers and policymakers always consider themselves smart enough to decide teachers' professional learning. Therefore, they do not engage them in designing their professional development. Findings showed that as English language and literacy teachers, participants want to have a professional development programme that is responsive to their needs. They need a development programme that includes training to raise their self-efficacy in the first-place. They wanted a positive learning environment where they can learn. In research from Althauser (2015, p.213) findings have shown that "an intensive, sustained, job-embedded professional development focused on teaching content is more likely to improve teacher knowledge, classroom instruction and student achievement"

6.4. Research question 3

Research question 3 sought to explore the suitable and adequate professional development model for English language and literacy teachers' development and growth in the research site. Thus, this section's findings answer the research question 3: What professional development model is most appropriate to our literacy teachers' needs?

The findings revealed that professional learning communities as situated professional learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) is a more useful development model than mandated professional development. Participants emphasised that networking collaboratively with their peers in a professional learning community added much to their knowledge than ever before. Interacting with colleagues informally enabled them to ask and assess their expertise without preservations freely. This interaction through conversations and discussions offers them opportunities to link theory

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and practice, identify discrepancies in their teaching approaches to set up problems, and discover hidden assumptions in teaching and learning.

Compared with mandatory development, most participants supported the idea of having integrated and collaborative professional learning communities in their school (Lave &Wenger, 1991; Gaible & Burns, 2005; Hord, 2009). They thought that such professional development would help them teach English language and literacy skills to their students more effectively than ever before. They claimed that in situated professional learning, they could focus on real problems in the classroom. Discussion with colleagues helps to solve these changes practically, unlike mandatory professional development where they were treated as passive learners.

Findings showed that the professional development provided to the participants took the format of formal or standardised professional development as mandatory training, were ineffective in classroom. The strategies and approaches used to deliver this development programme were workshops and lectures in style. It was provided generically without taking teachers' voice and dispositions into consideration, as explained in theme 3. Therefore, participants' understanding of the most trouble grasping in term of English language and literacy skills students have offers various indicators to affect teacher change if they are offered the right professional development.

Lave and Wenger (1991) claimed that situated learning that incorporates collaborative mindfulness practice in professional learning communities would lead to effective professional learning for teachers. They asserted that the best model for teachers' professional knowledge is school-based development as situated learning incorporates practice communities. Fullan (2006) also contended that school-based professional education is better than district-wide development. He made a clear distinction between professional development and professional learning development. To Fullan, professional development represents "workshop, conference, or other

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events that may or may not involve learning something new" (p.3). Thus, he concludes that real change in professional practices that leads to achieving the desired outcome lies in teachers engaging in continuous and sustained learning. Fullan confirmed that this professional learning should be about teachers' practices at the workplace. He believes that most of the formal professional development programmes provided outside schools are not relevant to teachers' needs. Thus, he confirms that school-based development (situated learning) has put teacher's education at the centre of the learning process, and will inform and influence teachers' behaviour inside the classroom.

Lave and Wenger's situated learning theory (1991) is grounded in the concept of social constructivist learning theory. Improving teacher professional learning should be a collaborative effort of the teachers in school as a social context instead of the idea of teacher formal mandated development. They emphasised the idea of a group of teachers who regularly network to reflect, refine, assess, and share the impact of their knowledge would regularly help increase their professional learning at higher levels. Lave and Wenger's characteristics of situated learning allow participants to work collaboratively with a shared vision to focus on student learning. This collaborative culture with colleagues enhances collective inquiry into best practice and current reality, leading to improved self-efficacy (Gavora, 2010; Ford, 2012; Althauser, 2015) and, consequently, to the teacher's commitment continuous improvement hence to enhanced student learning.

According to the constructivist theory of learning, knowledge construction should not be sought in mind, but in the social interaction and collaboration between individuals (Burner, 1966). Thus, teachers' mutual commitment to joint practices of reflection and collaborative inquiry in their professional provide an effective environment for teachers' professional learning. Involving

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English language and literacy teachers in learning communities like this could be the most effective professional development model that could be offered to them. Allowing teachers' learning continuity and sustainability within their context (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Fullan, 2006; Freeman, Reynolds, Toledo & Abu-Tineh, 2016; Nasser, 2017) will improve teachers' self-efficacy. Self-efficacy can powerfully influence teaching ability (Althauser, 2015). Thus, one way to optimise self-efficacy is to improve English language and literacy knowledge and reduce negative feelings toward English language teaching.

Moreover, data analysis showed that, when schools implement professional learning communities, the school staff will establish common goals and a shared language around reform (Poulos, Culbertson & Chad d'Entremont, 2013). Teachers will demonstrate a collective responsibility for student learning and use collaborative dialogue closely linked to practice. Moreover, the constructivist social theory that focuses on learning as affected by experience and interaction, also affirms that learners as information constructors can actively create new knowledge in collaborative social settings (Amineh & Davatgari, 2015). Additionally, teachers as self-directed learners are ready to learn in meaningful situations and likely to choose what they want to learn and what constitutes a need (Ford, 2012). Thus, the researcher thinks that interacting in collaborative school communities motivates teachers and helps them build both collective knowledge and capacity to evaluate their individual and joint work and feel committed to implementing the outcomes to improve their practices (Lawler, 2003; Gregson & Sturko, 2007).

Finally, despite the disagreement over situated learning/ school-based professional development provoked by some researchers such as Clune and Mann (1991), as mentioned in the literature review, who claimed that that schools should not be premises for professional development because teachers cannot conceive the need for change and implement the desired

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improvement on their own, several other researchers who compare the impact of formal development (district-wide) and informal teacher professional development (situated learning) on teachers' education, confirmed the importance of situated professional knowledge of sie-based professional development as the best model of learning for English language and literacy teachers' professional growth (Fullan,2006; Timperley, Wilson, Darling-Hammond et al, 2009; Mizell, 2010; Galanouli, 2010; Gulamhussein, 2013; Roy,2013;The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014; Geraldo, 2014; Cordingley, et al., 2015; Inasaridze, Lobzhanidze & Ratiani, 2015; Zimmerman, Knight, Favre & Ikhlef, 2016). Killion (2015) supports this viewpoint. He claims that when teachers engage in high-quality collaborative learning, they will benefit from individuals and groups. Therefore, regardless the differences about the concept of active professional development, the essential characteristics of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) or school-based professional development (Cheng, & Ko, 2009; Guskey 2000; Galanouli, 2010; Geraldo, 2014; Inasaridze, Lobzhanidze & Ratiani, 2015), have prompted consideration of informal professional learning communities over formal mandated professional learning. Research has also shown evidence of improved education, commitment, and professionalism of teachers who work together in learning communities, leading to better results (Putra, 2012). Therefore, to address students' underperformance in English language and literacy learning and solve the problems they face in English language classes in this research study, the researcher thinks that English language and literacy teachers require professional learning communities as situated learning. Thus, the situated learning and professional learning community model's community-based aspect relies on powerful education practices: reflection, critical dialogue and collaboration can reinforce the research site's social capital.

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Research by Simoncini, Lasen & Rocco (2014) indicated that reflective professional dialogue needs to be meaningfully contextualised and sustained over time. Thus, in the researcher's perspective, significant school-based development can result in positive teaching and learning outcomes. Therefore such development activities should meet both school and teacher need (Simoncini, Lasen & Rocco, 2014). The researcher also thinks that school-based professional development can best meet teachers' needs. It provides an opportunity for them to involve in development activities that address their specific needs and aligned with their professional practices any time they need it (Ford, 2012, Poulos, Culbertson & Chadd Entremont, 2013; Simoncini, Lasen, & Rocco, 2014; Inasarize, Lobzhani & Ratiani, 2015).

6.5. Summary

The findings of this study showed a fundamental shift in teachers' thinking about professional development. Participants agreed that mandatory professional development had a considerable impact on their practices in general. It was essential for addressing general issues such as English language and literacy standards and the Supreme Education Council's public policies. However, they essentially agreed on what useful English language and literacy professional should be. Professional learning communities' development as situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) is highly valued. It offers participants many opportunities to learn collaboratively and independently as adult learners guided by their own needs (Knowles, 1980) rather than professional development from top to down.

Findings showed that reflective practice turned into a core value in participants' professional learning. Participants, on several occasions, have emphasised the benefit of reflective practice and collaborative work with colleagues. Therefore, according to RAND's assessment of the Qatari education system in 2001, and their Report in 2012, professional development for Qatar

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schools' teachers was viewed a significant weakness in the schools and an area for intervention. Thus, there was a demand to reform schools as a starting point for teachers' development to move forward with the curriculum and assessment practices. This notion is supported by Fullan (2006). He clarified that real change in professional ways that leads to achieving the desired outcome lies in teachers engaging in continuous and sustained learning about their practice at the workplace. He emphasises that teachers need to observe colleagues' work in their schools and other teachers' work in different schools confronting similar problems. Teachers want to be followed by their colleagues in their classrooms and get feedback from them. He claims that exchanging experience and creating new knowledge with other colleagues improves teachers' professional performance and practices. Subsequently, a new paradigm for teachers' professional development must be adopted. Situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) can be a suitable alternative model for teachers' professional growth than mandatory professional development. The Supreme Education Council (SEC) in Qatar should identify teacher professional growth needs based on the situated learning theory's concepts. In other words, teacher professional development should fulfil situated learning requirements in terms of the domain, the community and the practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Lave and Wenger explained that the community of practice is formed by practitioners who engage in collective learning in a shared domain with common concern and a common goal to improve. This concept was noticed when participants worked together to find answers to their concerns regarding their professional development. Thus, as Lave and Wenger (1991) define, the domain is a network of practitioners committed to shared competence. If they do not interact together to solve a specific problem, they are not called a community.

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CHAPTER 7: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Implications

A number of implications emerged from this study's findings regarding future policy and practice in sustained professional development worthy of further research. They are divided into theoretical and practical implications.

7.1.1. Theoretical implications

This study's theoretical framework is Lave and Wenger's situated learning 'perspective' (SLP) (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Their framework identifies face to face interaction and collaboration among teachers as the main drivers in this type of professional learning. Both interactions and collaboration help them more readily organise their thoughts, reflect on their understanding and find gaps in their knowledge of learning and teaching. For teachers struggling with mandated professional development, these interactions and collaboration may be essential for effective professional learning. In theory, SLP based professional development can help build teachers' capacity (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Desimone, 2009). The stated goal of SLP is negotiated professional development. It allows teachers to collaborate, interact, reflect and better align the training with their specific needs. Furthermore, the emphasis in SLP on improving all student outcomes requires changing teachers' knowledge, beliefs and instructional practices to address the student's needs (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The SLP elements that lead to situated professional development are very much aligned with the researcher's conceptual framework. This conceptual framework was adapted from the work by (Desimone, 2009). In English language and literacy education, one of the end goals is to develop teachers who can positively affect student learning. The following diagram (Desimone,

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2009) depicts how these core features lead to better professional learning for teachers and, consequently, enhance student learning.

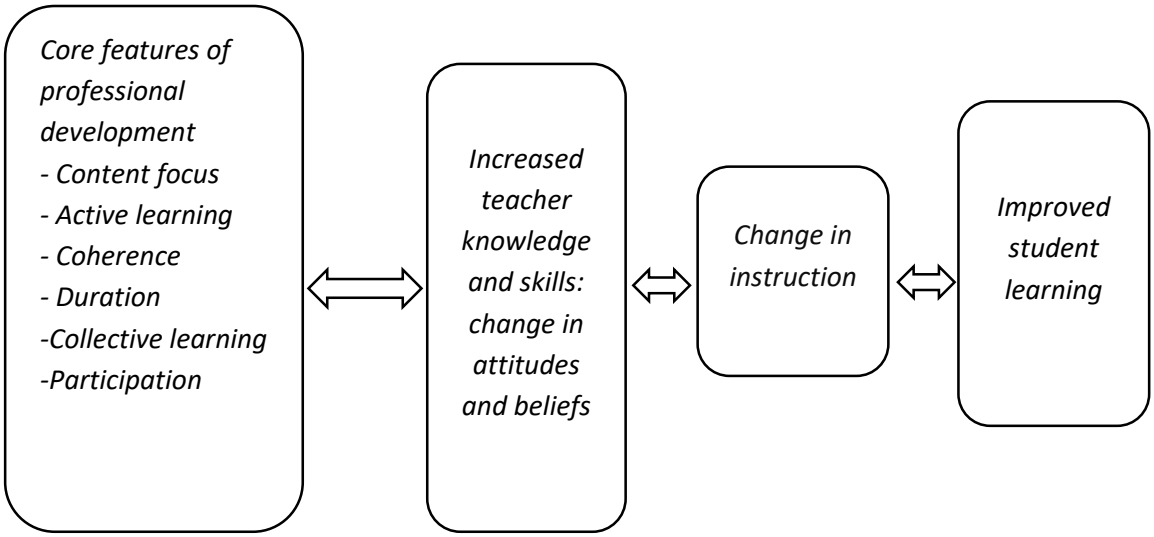

Figure 4: Effective professional development core features (Adapted from Desimone 2009)

Despite the claim that situated learning is a powerful model for professional development, it may be less effective if applied correctly. Situated learning is founded on the notion that people learn collectively through a community of practice and based to some extent on an apprenticeship model (Lave & Wenger, 1991). However, this perspective neglects self-regulated learning, where individuals plan for a task, monitor their performance, and then reflect on the outcome (Zimmerman, 2002). In the researcher's view, the apprenticeship model exposes teachers to an expert-driven approach similar to mandated professional development, in which knowledge is delivered from top to down. Thus, it may unduly support the notion that teachers are participants whose task is to implement what is imposed on them for teaching. The researcher further contends that teachers need to make choices about their learning and act on these choices. Without such autonomy, learning becomes 'other 'regulated' rather than 'self-regulated'. It is crucial to create a concrete social context for the teacher professional learning community in the research context in

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particular and Qatar schools. Doing this requires professional development policymakers to understand how teachers, as adult learners, learn in such a social environment.

7.1.2. Practical implications

Given that this study's main contribution is to recommend that professional development be based on situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) at the research site and in all Qatari schools instead of the mandated professional development, It is essential to understand what this means in practice.

Reflection on the current professional development programmes in the context of this study revealed that the professional development was generally held outside the school as a series of one-time initiatives in which the teachers' participation was often mandated and organised by a third party. Discussions with participants revealed that the topics taught in these mandated activities were often too broad for and disconnected from being easily applied in their classrooms. Besides, this type of professional development did not offer teachers opportunities to participate in the decision-making process regarding what should be explored, leaving them disassociated from the learning experience. Therefore, offering English language teachers various opportunities for reflection based on their practices may have a greater chance of transforming their teaching to benefit student learning (Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017). Promoting supportive environments that encourage effective learning and teaching to sustain professional learning opportunities is necessary. This study has thus given situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) due to prominence in describing what constitutes effective teachers' professional development.

The participants who took part in professional development based on these principles were positive about its effect. They valued the collaborative work with colleagues and the reflective practice it engendered. Indeed Lave and Wenger (1991) asserted that when learners involve and

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interact in situated learning with experts, they acquire knowledge gradually in their context, which eventually leads to improvement in professional practices. Participants also commented that this model allowed them to understand better their development needs to improve English language and literacy learning and teaching in their classrooms. This notion is supported by Richards and Farrell (2005, p.7), who contend that English language teachers need to be able to take part in activities such as:

- engaging in self-reflection and evaluation
- developing specialised knowledge and skills about many aspects of teaching
- expanding their knowledge base about research, theory, and issues in teaching
- taking on new roles and responsibilities, such as supervisor or mentor teacher, teacher-researcher, or materials writer,
- developing collaborative relationships with other teachers

However, the study revealed that both mandatory (formal) professional development and professional learning communities as situated learning could also help teachers make changes in their thinking and practice, which might have a bearing on student learning.

In this study, the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) has emerged as an appropriate foundation upon which to base effective professional development for English language teachers. It suggests that decision-makers should rethink the current teacher professional development model and base it on a constructivist framework. Simultaneously, a set of clear guidelines for high-quality English language and professional literacy training are needed. Accordingly, the study proposed three practical suggestions related to the following:

- The nature of the English language and literacy professional development content

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- The role of the English language and literacy teachers in designing their professional development programmes
- The role of school leaders in fostering teacher professional learning culture

7.1.2.1. The nature of professional development content

This study recommends that the English language and literacy teacher professional development be carefully designed and structured, considering its impact on the English language and literacy learning of students and incorporate hands-on technology use. It could be job-related, apply to specific curricula, manage knowledge and skills, beliefs, occur over time and take place with other colleagues. It also needs to provide technical assistance and support to teachers and incorporate evaluation to measure its effectiveness (Hunzicker, 2011). In summary, this implies that a more practical approach to the development of teachers' professional knowledge is needed, besides the normal mandatory professional development model.

7.1.2.2. The role of teachers in designing their professional development programmes.

The designers of professional development programmes for the teachers of English language and literacy need to be mindful of the need to encourage reflective practitioners. The more teachers know and understand their needs and how they act in classrooms, the more they will select a suitable approach to their literacy teaching. Thus, they should have the opportunity to debate and work out practical ideas on improving and enhancing their instructional practices and teaching strategies. They need to be heard when professional development is designed. Teachers are more likely to improve their instructional approaches if they recognise that teacher professional development programmes are relevant and address their needs (Meissel, Parr & Timperley, 2016).

7.1.2.3. The role of school leaders in fostering teacher professional learning culture

There is a growing recognition in the field of teacher professional development that both school leaders and teachers must continually reshape their knowledge of learning and teaching;

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therefore, they must engage in effective teacher professional development. School leaders have a significant role in fostering practice in their schools. They may exercise substantial influence on teacher professional development by creating a suitably productive learning environment in which professional teacher learning can occur (Easton, 2008; DuFour, Mizell, 2010; Hord, 2009; DuFour, Eaker, Many & Mattos, 2016). They can directly affect professional development through their leadership and skills in planning, implementing, providing, facilitating, evaluating, communicating and organising the environment (Australian Standards for Principals, 2011; Day & Sammons, 2013; Ryan & Tilburg, 2013). Thus, the researcher contends that school leaders in the context of this study must manage the English language and literacy teachers' professional development by, in the first instance, facilitating the transfer of training to the workplace. Additionally, English language and literacy teachers need to be made part of a learning community. Leaders should encourage the development of a culture of evidence-based practice, collaboration and reflection on effective learning and teaching if the underperformance of students in English in all its forms is to be addressed.

English language and literacy teachers in the context of this study are challenged by the tension between their own specific development needs, those of their school and those resulting from professional development activities suggested (or required) by their school management or by the local education authority (Galanouli, 2010). This situation makes it difficult for them to reconcile all the competing demands. Thus, situated learning is considered the most appropriate approach to address these tensions found in this school and more broadly across Qatar because it draws on contextual realities in which teachers work (Saigal, 2012).

Policymakers and professional providers should primarily consider how teacher development impacts student learning (Meissel, Parr & Timperley, 2016). They should also rethink

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their approach to teacher professional development to encourage positive change in teacher practices (Fullan, 2006). Teachers are willing to improve their practice but expect professional development programmes to help them to do so. Their opinions are important and should be sought. They are in the best position to readily identify any programme elements that are the most relevant to them.

7.3. Research Impact

Portions of this study were presented at the 2018 professional development training sessions in Qatar's development and training centre. They were also introduced to the SEC's stakeholders under the title 'Teacher Development between Centralisation and Decentralisation. Officials in Qatar's development and training centre highly valued them. As a result, they were adopted and applied to Qatar's government schools as a new paradigm of professional development. Now all schools are involved in school-based professional learning communities instead of mandatory professional development.

This study's findings could be readily extended to help other schools in Qatar, the region and beyond, who are seeking ways to improve education quality. The knowledge generated will help them create effective professional development environments that can improve their classrooms' teaching practices.

7.4. Recommendations

This study's most crucial task is to help improve English language and professional literacy development. Schools should be recognised as places where teachers can be empowered to share their expertise and experience. Situated professional learning or school-based professional development is a useful tool for realising and supporting this aim. Thus, the researcher contends that school-based professional development programmes can better meet teachers' needs than any

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other professional development model. The essence of situated learning as constructivism theory is that individuals learn when they have gained experience from what they know based on their current and past knowledge (Bruner, 1966). Given that, as adult learners, teachers are more self-directed (Knowles, 1980), they are in a position to select what they are interested in and engage in collaborative professional learning communities to create their pedagogical knowledge. Teachers' views must, therefore, be taken into account when designing professional development programmes. They should not be ignored because learning should be based on the core of what happens in the classroom (OECD, 2009). English language and literacy teachers must help design their professional development programmes to enhance knowledge and be responsive to students' learning needs. School leaders and professional development providers should create a climate in school that allows teachers to develop ownership, innovation, and share experiences and challenge the orthodox practice and thinking associated with learning and teaching.

Ultimately it is paramount that policymakers and school leaders ensure that professional development opportunities are practical and meet teachers' needs (OECD, 2009). For example, one area of significant concern amongst teachers is behaviour management. How to handle classroom conflicts and maintain discipline should form part of the mix of topics explored collectively.

In conclusion, professional learning communities can positively impact professional learning and instructional practices in the classroom if they are guided by input from teachers.

7.5 Attributes and skills gained as a doctoral student in this study**.**

The researcher developed many new skills as a result of completing this research. At its most basic level, he refined his view of what he wanted to do and how to do it.

Given that critical thinking is an essential component of doctoral study (Wellington et al., 2005; Lee, 2008), the researcher has become more aware of how vital these skills are for school

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leaders to improve learning (Cortell, 2005). Possessing these skills will enable school leaders to be more profound thinkers and better placed to allow for positive change to happen in their workplace. To this end, the researcher has worked very hard to apply critical thinking to the staff's problems in his school, trying to improve performance.

The researcher has concluded that knowledge is not holy. It should be subject to question He has also learnt that school leaders have an essential role in fostering and improving a rich learning environment for both teachers and students. This role requires acting with integrity, fairness and ethics. The school leader's role should involve facilitating a shared vision of learning and creating instructional programmes which are the most conducive to student learning. The researcher has become more aware of the importance of meeting teachers at their point of greatest need, allowing them to reflect, discuss and provide meaningful and sustained assistance to one another (Spark, 2002). He now recognises more readily how to bridge the gap between what he knows and what he does not know as a workplace leader.

The researcher considers the reflection experience as a self-image. There is a hazard in moving out of his safe "Zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1978 to new, untested regions to collaborate with staff members to address workplace changes. Reflecting on the whole experience is an important part to show his ups and downs throughout the thesis process. Collaborative work and reflection are essential skills that should be developed by practitioners (Shon, 1987). Consequently, the researcher learned that:

- The research process is one of trial and error. When the researcher started the study, he did not know where to go because of his little research experience.
- As a practitioner, he learned that critical thinking is critical to improving how people express their ideas. Nevertheless, the researcher would not claim he did that perfectly well

in this study. He is all confident that critical reflection can be acquired with time as it needs more time practice.

- Collaboration and communication with staff members would lead to an entire improvement in profession and school.
- Identify the reflective practice process and make connections that weave data together; this helped him develop a deeper understanding of the research process.

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CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

This study explored the current professional development programme of English language and literacy teachers in a boys' middle school in Qatar's northern part. It was found that the English language and literacy teacher professional development was an area that precisely needed much more attention due to the weakness of this type of professional development to lead to improved student learning in English language and literacy skills.

Several factors within the research site environment and outside hindered teachers' professional development. One such factor was the top-down professional development design. Furthermore, though some value was placed on formal mandated development, it could not be compared with the value of the professional learning communities as situated/ authentic learning inside the school (Lave & Wenger, 1991), which directly impacts teachers' professional knowledge. Political and administrative factors impeded fostering the culture of sustained professional development in the school. Mandated professional development caused English language and literacy teachers to engage in activities devoted to teaching-related functions. Henceforth, they have retained their teaching identities, rather than becoming reflective practitioners participating collaboratively with peers to solve their work problems. Teachers' characteristics as adult learners (Knowles, 1980) were influential in developing as English language and literacy teachers. These characteristics could impact the level of professional growth and development related to what activities they engaged in.

School leadership has an essential role to play in teachers' professional development in making change happen by creating and supporting a positive environment for teachers' professional learning as adult learners (Knowles, 1980). These perceptions and attitudes affect and guide teachers' practice and influence students' performance. They should identify the need to

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make a paradigm shift towards fostering better development of teacher professional learning development in the school. They should offer teachers different opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge to move from passive to active participants. In this way, they will become influential leaders to guide teachers in becoming effective and quality teachers.

This study confirms a need for more interaction and collaboration among English language and literacy teachers to become quality teachers. Teamwork, communication, reflection and sharing of ideas can be recognised in Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning theory. Situated learning theory provides a social environment for learning (Bruner, 1966) where teachers can engage and interact effectively with each other for a shared goal. Though several research studies have explored the importance of teachers' development regarding professional learning communities, little attention was given to this type of development in schools. This claim has been confirmed in many studies that have reported favourable outcomes associated with successfully implementing school-based professional as a situated learning model that based on collaborative and reflective practice (Husbands, 2011; Murray, 2015).

Research has emphasised that reflective practice plays a vital role in teacher professional development (Murray, 2015). It is found that professional development guided by the teachers' needs can increase the effectiveness of their professional practices. Findings from this study referred to a positive perception of collaborative, reflective practice. Participants acknowledged significant benefits associated with their participation in a collaborative, thoughtful process with colleagues.

In conclusion, all these perceptions indicated that active professional development is characterised by engaging teams of teachers in learning opportunities to increase their knowledge and expand their expertise to improve students learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Mizell, 2010;

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Kennedy, 2016). Therefore, building teachers' capacities to improve English language and literacy learning requires selecting an active professional development model that must align with teachers and students' needs. Situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) is considered the best model for teachers' development. It promotes reflection, collaboration, interaction, autonomy and the teacher's voice. It forms the foundation of effective classroom instruction by helping teachers learn self-efficacy through ideas and thoughts. They set instructional goals, reflect on how they are working together, and suggest ways to improve. Thus, forming a professional identity occurs in a culturally specific context where reflective activities facilitate teachers' professional development. Ivanova and Skara-MincĿne (2016) emphasised this view. They argue that if "the overall aim of a teacher education program is best conceived as the development of professional identity" (p. 530), teachers' professional growth should provide meaningful, authentic support through guided reflection to facilitate this development.

Despite the criticism against situated learning theory, the theory allows intensive collaboration among practitioners to research rigorous evidence about their instructional practices and student achievement (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Researchers who supported school-based professional development supporters like (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Cheng & Ko, 2009; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Galanouli, 2010; Geraldo, 2014) claim that teachers could collaborate to solve a common problem at the workplace. They could create and implement a plan to achieve a common goal. Their discussion and reflection is the critical component of such collaborative professional learning.

Henceforth, recommendations were made for future changes in the professional development design for English language and literacy teachers to become sustained job-embedded activities instead of formal mandated development alone. Policymakers and school leaders have

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to play their roles more professionally to establish policies within the system to foster the culture of situated professional learning communities' development as the most effective approach for teachers' development and growth.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Individual Interview Questions

Indicative Semi-structured interview questions.

Describe your experience(s) teaching literacy to your students in your setting?

- How do you adjust curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of your students?

Would you welcome the opportunity to contribute to the development of literacy?

professional training programs?

Are the rationale for learning and teaching literacy readily apparent in the literacy development programme?

- Please explain.

What training do you think you need to help you teach literacy effectively to your students?

- Describe the teaching techniques or strategies that are most effective for you.
- Why do you think these strategies are essential?

Who do you think should be responsible for developing the objectives of the literacy development program?

- What makes you think so?

Share with me an example of an important issue that you added to your literacy teaching strategies which were not included in the professional development program?

- IF so, please explain how you accomplished it.

Do you think you have benefitted on an individual or personal level from the new knowledge provided to you in the professional development program?

- If so, please explain.

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Appendix 2. Participant Consent Form

Committee on Research Ethics

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project:	Improving English language and literacy instruction: Meeting teachers at their point of need through effective professional development: A practitioner Collaborative Workshop in A Middle School in Qatar in Qatar"	
Researcher(s):	**Fathelrahman Abbas Hamza Omer**	**Please initial box**

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet [dated 7th April 2016] for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ×

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected. Besides, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. ×

3. I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify me in any publications. ×

×

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4. I understand and agree that once I submit my data, it will become anonymised, and I will no longer withdraw my data.

5. I agree to take part in the above study. ×

   To indicate that you consent to participate in this research, please email the school administrator Mr Mohammad Rabeiah Alkuwari at schooladmin22@yahoo.com stating that " I consent to participate in the research study tilted: How Can I support teachers to bring about functional changes to literacy instruction? A collaborative study with English department teachers of two Independent Preparatory schools in Qatar."

Participant Name	Date	Signature
Name of Person taking consent	Date	Signature
Mohammad Rabeiah Alkuwari	7.04.2016	Mohammad Rabeiha.K
Researcher	Date	Signature

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Appendix 3. Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

(PIS)

Research Project Title:

"Improving literacy learning in the English language as a second through effective professional development; A practitioner Collaborative, reflective Practice workshop.

(Version 2.1 April 2016)

Dear participants,

I am Fathelrahman Abbas Hamza Omer; I am currently a doctoral student at the University of Liverpool, UK, in Higher Education. You are invited to participate in a participatory action research study titled: " Improving English language and literacy Instruction: Meeting teachers at their point of need through effective professional development: A practitioner Collaborative Workshop in A Middle School in Qatar

The purpose of the project:

This project aims at investigating and evaluating the current literacy professional development programs provided to teachers in the organization to identify effective models of professional development delivery to meet teachers' needs best so that they can improve reading comprehension in English language content area (Ness,2009; Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez,2003).

You have been asked to consider taking part in this research study because you are a literacy teacher who aims to improve students' skills in literacy learning. You also have attended several literacy professional development programmes; thus, you will have valuable insights to add to this study. Your views are being sought to add useful ideas to design a powerful literacy program for literacy instruction in the organization. This is voluntary participation. You can accept or reject to take part in the study without explaining the reason. If you choose to participate in this study, the study will include ten other English language teachers from another school. Not all potential participants may agree to take part in the study. However; the possibility of conducting secondary data analysis on the available data on the school system will allow the researcher to continue conducting his research even if a reduced number agreed to take part.

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Data collection methods

There will be three phases of data collection. First, you will be asked to fill out the research questionnaire. This will not take more than fifteen minutes of your time. The questionnaire will be used to survey your opinions on specific literacy skills and strategies you prefer to employ and to use in your classes.

Secondly, for the focus group interview, you will be interviewed together in two groups for one hour. Each focus group interview will include ten participants only.

In case not all participants agree to participate in the study, the researcher will continue conducting this study even if only small participants accept being interviewed.

Thirdly, each participant will be interviewed individually for 45 minutes immediately after the focus group interview sessions finish. Interviews will take place off-campus in a private, comfortable room where your identity will never be revealed.

NB: A week before the study commences, you will be provided with the school professional plan documents for reflection and evaluation.

Privacy and confidentiality?

Your participation in this project will be strictly confidential. No one's name will be asked or revealed during the focus groups or individual interviews. If by chance, you or someone you know addresses you by name in the sessions, the researcher will delete all characters from the transcription; there will be no identifying information or characters used in any written reports or publications which result from this evaluation project. The researcher on the text will not reveal the identities of those who agree to take part in any of the final two stages of the data collection process (focus group, interviews).

For more privacy and confidentiality, the researcher will ask all potential participants in the group interviews to sign a form of trust and respect that emphasizes that all members should respect everyone's privacy and promise that what is shared in the focus interview stays in the room.

Interviews will take place off-campus in a private, comfortable room where your identities will never be revealed to anybody. These interviews will take place at a time which is mutually convenient to both the researcher and you. If you decide to skip any questions or withdraw at any phase of the study, you can do that without penalties. With your permission, the interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed for research purposes.

Data collected and generated from you will be anonymized, and a fictitious name/code will only identify you. The questionnaire will also be anonymized and sent to you to fill out via the school website where your identity will not be disclosed. Electronic data will be stored on password-protected removable data storage tools (e.g. external hard disc). They will be kept together with other data documents in a locked password closet that only the researcher has access to its key. All communications will be conducted via

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the standard password email that the researcher will create, especially for the research. Anonymous data generated from you will be stored for five years.

For the secondary data analysis, the researcher will ask the school administrator to select ten teachers' observation forms and remove any identifying factors and identify text and code them. It will not be possible to reveal your identities in this way.

If you agree to participate in this study, you can send back the consent form under your signature to the school administrator at schooladmin22@yahoo.com. If you have any questions regarding your participation in the study, you can contact the primary supervisor of this research at Anthony. Edwards @online.liverpool.ac.uk if you wish.

The benefits of the research project:

No compensation or gifts will be provided to participants for their participation in the study. The benefit of participating in this study will be the improvement of teachers' professional development and the enhancement of reading comprehension skills for students and subsequent students.

Risks in the project:

You might feel some pressures due to the principal investigator's presence in the study. Still, you need to know that the researcher's role in this study is entirely separate from his school's professional role. The researcher is looking for ways to enhance and build participants' capacities and empower them to become experienced teachers in literacy education. Also, you might experience some physical discomfort which may result due to participation in the interviews. However; in case you experience any discomfort, distress, or pressure due to your participation in this study, you may cease your participation immediately or leave the interview without explanation or asking you about the reasons. You have full right to contact the supervisor of this research via anthony.edwards@online.Liverpool.ac.uk or the Research Participant Advocate at the University of Liverpool at 001-612-312-1210 (USA number). Alternatively, via email address: liverpoolethics@ohecampus.com if you feel your rights are violated due to your participation in this study.

Your rights:

This study is guided by research ethics and professional values, which require all participants to have their voice and feel free to express their opinions for the study's benefit without any harm or negative consequences on their career. Taking part in this project is voluntary. You can withdraw at any time and any phase of the project without asking why your decision is. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you feel tired, you can ask for a break or ask for rescheduling your interview session. If

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you decided not to take part and withdraw, this would not affect your Professional standing in the organization in any way.

The researcher will not access your data without written permission from you and the school administrator. You have full right to contact the thesis supervisor or the Participant Research Advocate at the University of Liverpool via the contact information provided to you in this participant Information Sheet if you feel your rights are violated and career life is endangered due to your participation in the study.

What if I have a problem/complaint?

If you are unhappy or a problem, please feel free to contact the supervisor of this research study via anthony.edwards@online.Liverpool.ac.uk or the Research Participant Advocate at the University of Liverpool 001-612-312-1210 (USA number). Alternatively, via email address: liverpoolethics@ohecampus.com

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

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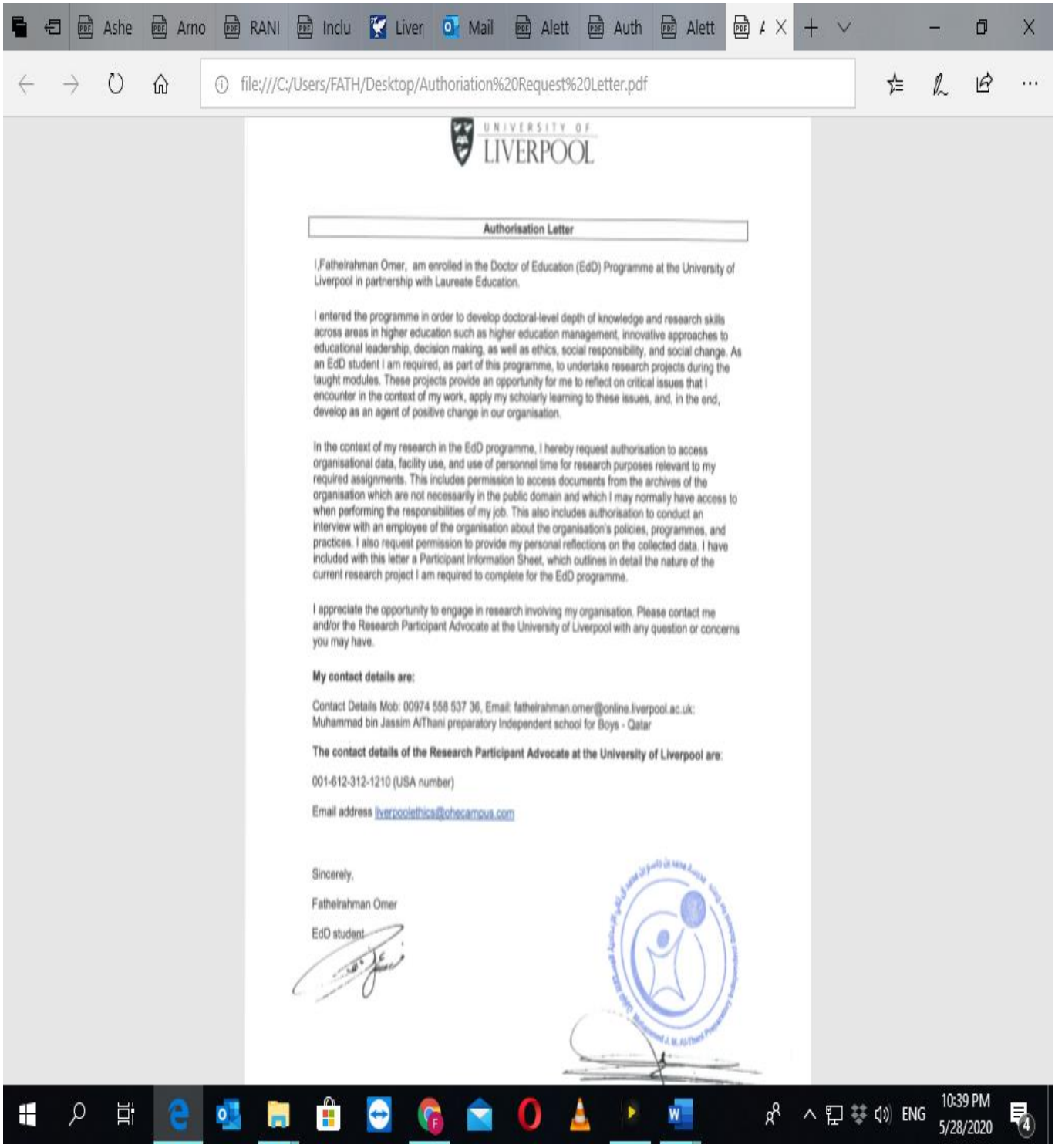
Appendix4 Authorisation Letter



UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

Authorisation Letter

I,Fathelrahman Omer, am enrolled in the Doctor of Education (EdD) Programme at the University of Liverpool in partnership with Laureate Education.

I entered the programme in order to develop doctoral-level depth of knowledge and research skills across areas in higher education such as higher education management, innovative approaches to educational leadership, decision making, as well as ethics, social responsibility, and social change. As an EdD student I am required, as part of this programme, to undertake research projects during the taught modules. These projects provide an opportunity for me to reflect on critical issues that I encounter in the context of my work, apply my scholarly learning to these issues, and, in the end, develop as an agent of positive change in our organisation.

In the context of my research in the EdD programme, I hereby request authorisation to access organisational data, facility use, and use of personnel time for research purposes relevant to my required assignments. This includes permission to access documents from the archives of the organisation which are not necessarily in the public domain and which I may normally have access to when performing the responsibilities of my job. This also includes authorisation to conduct an interview with an employee of the organisation about the organisation's policies, programmes, and practices. I also request permission to provide my personal reflections on the collected data. I have included with this letter a Participant Information Sheet, which outlines in detail the nature of the current research project I am required to complete for the EdD programme.

I appreciate the opportunity to engage in research involving my organisation. Please contact me and/or the Research Participant Advocate at the University of Liverpool with any question or concerns you may have.

My contact details are:

Contact Details Mob: 00974 558 537 36, Email: fathelrahman.omer@online.liverpool.ac.uk: Muhammad bin Jassim AlThani preparatory Independent school for Boys - Qatar

The contact details of the Research Participant Advocate at the University of Liverpool are:

001-612-312-1210 (USA number)

Email address liverpoolethics@ohecampus.com

Sincerely,

Fathelrahman Omer

EdD student

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Appendix 5 Letter of Authorisation to Conduct Research as Faculty

Independent School for Boys

الإعدادية المستقلة للبنين

Letter of Authorization to Conduct Research at Facility

Office of Ethics Committee
University of Liverpool – U. k

Subject: Letter of Authorization to Conduct Research at Muhammad bin Jassim Al Thani preparatory independent school.

Dear Office of Ethics Committee – Human Subjects:

This letter will serve as authorization for the University of Liverpool researcher/research team, [Fathelrahman Abbas Hamza Omer] to conduct the research project entitled Leading towards Effective Instruction: How can I support teachers to bring about practical changes to literacy instruction? A collaborative Study with English Department Teachers of Muhammad bin Jassim Al Thani preparatory independent school in Qatar. at [Muhammad bin Jassim Al Thani preparatory independent school]

The Facility acknowledges that it has reviewed the protocol presented by the researcher, as well as the associated risks to the Facility. The Facility accepts the protocol and the associated risks to the Facility, and authorizes the research project to proceed. The researcher is permitted to access all data needed for the research study and to meet with the selected participants at any time. The research project may be implemented at the Facility upon approval from the University of Liverpool Ethics Committee.

If we have any concerns or require additional information, we will contact the researcher and/or the University of Liverpool Ethics Committee via Email address: liverpoolethics@lohecampus.com

Sincerely,

Facility's Authorized Signatory

Date: October 25, 2015

Muhammad Rabia Al -Kuwari / School Principal

Printed Name and Title of Authorized Signatory

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